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LETTERS FROM FLORENCE

ON

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THE RELIGIOUS REFORM MOVEMENTS

IN ITALY.

141458

BY

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PREFACE.

THE following letters on the religious condition and prospects of Italy at the present day, while noticing the general movement towards religious reformation going on in that country, were chiefly intended to demonstrate the reality of a movement in that direction in a Catholic sense.

The larger portion of the letters has already appeared in the "Guardian" newspaper.

It has been suggested, however, to the writer that one of the objects which he had in view, besides conveying information—viz., that of attracting the attention of English Churchmen more generally to the struggles and hardships of the Italian Catholic Reform party, and inviting their assistance—may be further promoted by reprinting and circulating what has been said in a separate form. Having been very deeply moved, far more deeply indeed than he has either ventured or been able to express, by what he saw and heard at Florence and elsewhere, of the distress and perse-

cutions to which very estimable persons are exposed, simply because they are known to entertain reforming principles, he will only be too glad if the suggestion made prove efficacious, and enable him, in ever so small a degree, to contribute in bringing help, where help is so much needed.

There is evidently a great work to be done in Italy—viz., to guide the strongly fluctuating and almost tumultuous currents of religious feeling which are now in motion in that country, in a right direction while it is yet time. Ere long, this movement will inevitably have assumed a definite course of its own, which it will then be well nigh impossible either to arrest or to turn aside. Apparently, it may depend very much upon the exertion of judicious action at the present moment, whether that course shall be one which English Churchmen may have reason to exult over and approve.

It is obvious that any appeal made in the direction indicated, can only be addressed to those who recognize the principle that it is at once the right and the duty of the Church of England to hold out a helping hand to the Church of Italy, in the efforts now making by the latter to reconstitute herself upon a more scriptural and primitive basis. To those who deny to us a right to

interfere at all, and even account it a grave offence to do so, no mere representations of the necessities and hardships of those engaged in the present struggle in Italy, can, of course, carry any weight. It seems fair, however, to suppose that such opinions are shared only by a very small minority in our Church, when we find it affirmed, in a recent meeting of the Anglo-Continental Society, that four primates and thirty bishops, with four hundred members, including some of the most eminent laymen in the country, declare themselves in favour of a totally different course of action.

But although the agreement in principle seems to be therefore nearly unanimous, it is not, unfortunately, quite the same with regard to practice. A difference of opinion exists, as to how far the interference and action of the Church of England may be legitimately carried in the matter; and this difference of opinion seems to have reached its culminating point, in the question of those Anglican Congregationalists (for want of a better designation) of Italy, spoken of in the following pages.

Now the writer has contented himself with simply giving a picture of one of these congregations, as it presented itself to his observa-

tion, and of the impression it was calculated to produce. But he purposely abstained from pronouncing any opinion upon the legitimacy of their proceedings, nor does he venture to do so now. Only, as having evidently been impressed favourably with what he saw and heard of this particular phase of the Italian movement, he may be permitted, perhaps, to state the light in which he regarded it, when so speaking of it.

The question, he ventures to suggest, may, perhaps, have been viewed too absolutely, both by those who disapprove of, and those who are inclined to favour these congregations. It seems to involve, however, considerations at once of principle and expediency, which scarcely admit of such peremptory solution. The question of principle appears to be capable of being modified, sometimes, by the intentions and position of the parties so acting; and that of expediency, by the effect which such a mode of action may produce upon others. With regard to the question of principle, the practical points which present themselves for consideration appear to be these: First, as to intention; there should be no intention whatever, on the part of persons frequenting these congregations, to supersede the old historical Church of Italy by a new Church of Anglican, or any other

denomination. Their existence, as a body separated from their own Church, should be avowedly of a merely temporary and provisional character, called forth by the exigencies and necessities of the situation, and ready to merge again, at any moment, into the movement of Catholic Reformation, whenever that movement becomes general and capable of re-admitting them. Secondly, as to position. Such congregations could only be tolerated in the case of parties, who, while holding firmly to Catholic truth, find themselves unable, for conscience' sake (as any of ourselves might be), to participate in the chief Sacrament, as at present administered in their own Church. Dr. Newman allows, in his recently published letter, that the "claims of conscience are paramount" in such a case, and "not to be overleaped by men in order to make their path easier." Now, there are many persons in Italy, both priests and laymen, who cannot conform to the manner in which the rites of their Church are administered by the Romish clergy, without doing this violence to their consciences. These persons claim the privilege of meeting among themselves, and having the rites of the Church administered to them by such of their own clergy as share their scruples.

Next, as to the question of expediency. It is necessary, no doubt, to be extremely cautious, and to consider what the effect of such a proceeding as the above may have upon others; and how far it may be of a nature to compromise ourselves, and cause the Church of England to be regarded in the same light, by Italians, as any of the Protestant bodies, foreign or indigenous, who are acting among them on totally different principles. Such a result would assuredly be highly injurious to our influence (as is shown in the following pages), and, therefore, to the general movement which, alone, we seek to promote. But, on the other hand, there may be cases in which, by the judgment of discreet persons on the spot, we might work effectually and towards the right end, by example as well as precept, and show the true character of the Church of England in the exhibition of her offices, as well as in the exposition of her doctrines. The expediency of such a mode of proceeding can only, perhaps, be fairly judged of by those on the spot, who are well acquainted with the feelings and disposition of the locality. In some places, such a demonstration might only irritate and do harm; in others, it might be both welcome, and convey information to the eye, which might never meet the ear.

Now, all that is ventured or intended to be here suggested is that the rule respecting this difficult question should not be made absolute, in all cases, in a prohibitive sense; but that where the intentions of the parties were manifest, and could be trusted, in the sense above indicated, where their position was really a case of conscience, and where expediency also seemed to favour such action, that there the degree of countenance or support, or even bare tolerance, to be afforded, should be left to the discretion of those on the spot to decide. In fact, that every case should be judged of by itself; that the general rule of action of the Church, in this matter, should still be not to promote or encourage the appearance of such manifestations, but that when they arose, from causes over which she had no control, then each case should be considered separately, and treated according to its own merits and circumstances, without being condemned *à priori*. Some such compromise might, perhaps, be accepted and acted on, without involving also a compromise of principle; and so, that unity of action on the subject be maintained among ourselves, which is so essential to our strength, and to the attainment of the common object of our exertions.

These suggestions are thrown out with great deference by the writer for far higher authority, than any he can pretend to, and with a sincere desire to find some common ground of action for all parties, in the great work which is in hand.

W. T.

Paris, March, 1866.

LETTER I.

The Engadine—Number of Travellers there—Principal Halting-places — St. Moritz, Samaden, Pontresina — Advantages of the latter—Historical and Ecclesiastical Character of Pontresina—Moorish Origin—Pietro Paolo Vergerio—His early Career, Conversion, and Arrival at Pontresina—Present Religious Status of the Inhabitants —Natural Beauties and Attractions of the Place and of the Valley—Engadine Houses—Habits of Emigration and mode of Living.

The Engadine (*Grisons*), *August*, 1865.

Our projected route to Florence lay through the remote corner of Switzerland, the name of which stands at the head of this letter, thence to descend into Italy by the beautiful, but hitherto little frequented pass of the Maloya. The experiences of the journey to its ultimate destination and chief object of inquiry do not possess the slightest claim to the wonderful, or even the remarkable. But a few brief notes of Engadine travel, which

will have at least the merit of being seasonable, may recall pleasant *souvenirs* to those who have been there already, and supply a few hints to such as are turning their thoughts thitherward for another summer.

The Engadine is a high valley amongst the Bernina range of Alps, which may be not unaptly described as a cradle or hammock suspended from the summits of lofty surrounding mountains, the outer sides of some one of which must necessarily be scaled before you can enter it. Its position is so elevated that there is no level way into it, either at the ends or sides, and the only access is, therefore, by a pass of greater or lesser altitude. None of these routes, however, even in former times, presented any insuperable difficulties, or amounted to what an Alpine Club man would rank as a first-class pass. The highest, I think, is the Albula, which rises to nearly 8000 feet, and is still only practicable, at least by the old and far the most beautiful road, on foot. But a great change in the condition of the valley has been effected of late years; and whereas formerly its inhabitants only were, from their migratory character, generally known to Europe, now all Europe seems bent upon penetrating into the recesses of the valley itself.

Nor are facilities for doing so any longer wanting. When H. D. Inglis published his agreeable but now somewhat old-fashioned work on Switzerland, some thirty or five-and-thirty years ago, there were no means whatever of getting into the Engadine, save on foot; and the very full and accurate local information which he communicated of the district, and its curious manners and customs, read almost like the narrative of a traveller who returns from newly-discovered regions. I remember well the curiosity which it awakened at the time, but which seems only just now to be fully developing itself in action.

The reasons for the general rush towards the Engadine, which is taking place this summer, are to be found, probably, in the increased ease of access, and in the desire to find some point of Switzerland removed from the continually augmenting stream of tourists.

It is becoming, indeed, a very general complaint among English travellers of the better class in Switzerland, that the country is too full to hold them; or at least, that it is too encumbered with tourists of every description, in the present day, to allow any longer of moving about in it either with convenience or gratification. In the course of my summer's ramble

this year, I have heard repeated over and over again the expressions, "We must give up Switzerland for a time at least;" "This is the last time we shall come to Switzerland for a year or two." And this on the part not of the fastidious only, or inexperienced, or ill-to-please; but of those who are ready to put up with almost any thing, except, perhaps, being mobbed, or with the very humblest of accommodation, if they could only feel sure of not being elbowed out of all accommodation whatever.

And, in truth, what between the early invasion of the Germanic tribes, who swarm in these regions from June, or even sooner, to the end of July, quickly followed by new inroads of Italians, English, French, and now, again, by fresh legions of Transatlantic explorers, with replenished purses and renovated self-possession, there is no interval of the fine weather season, nor any foot of the Swiss territory worth seeing, which is not bespoken long beforehand. Such accessible and formerly snugly retired haunts as Engelberg and Seelisberg, about which I ventured to say a few favourable words two years ago in the *Guardian*, and have been accused, I may add *en passant*, of having in consequence aided to make matters worse than they were

before—such places have become simple impossibilities, and the reply to applications for accommodation at them is more often made with reference to next year than next month.

But to return to the Engadine. There are now no less than four good carriage-roads by which this hitherto remote valley may be approached—viz. over the Julier Pass from the north, and over the Bernina Pass from the south, by the Maloya Pass at its western, and by the Finstermünz at its eastern extremity. All these are of comparatively recent construction; and the effect of such a change may be imagined upon a locality raised more than 5000 feet above the level of ordinary habitation, and hitherto approached only by those whose legs were strong enough to carry them into its recesses. The advance from roads to railroads, in other parts of Switzerland, is as nothing compared with this sudden transition from isolation to a general centre of attraction. When Inglis visited the Engadine, nothing, of course, worthy the name of an hotel existed. He passed the night sometimes, indeed, in a wretched *auberge;* but more usually was obliged to have recourse to the pastor or *curé*, or to the hospitality of one of those returned emigrants, whose huge houses are still the distinguishing characteristic of the Engadine

villages, and who took him in, generally for a "consideration." It was even mainly owing to this enforced intrusion upon private benevolence, that Inglis was indebted for the large amount of accurate local information which, in spite of no better medium of communication than almost unintelligible German and Romansch, he was able to collect for his readers.

But a wonderful change has come over the valley since those days, and within a very recent period. At the village of St. Moritz alone, for instance, there were assembled sometimes, during the present summer, more than seven hundred visitors at once, and wealth was pouring into that Alpine hamlet at the rate of almost as many pounds sterling per day. In seeking the Engadine for interest, fine air, and fine scenery, none will have reason to complain, or be disappointed in the result of their expedition. But as to solitude, retirement, tranquillity, or the hope indulged in of getting a little out of the way of other people, such dreams are now no more to be realized there than in any other part of Switzerland. The invasion has extended itself thither, as it has every where else.

We took the Julier Pass to arrive at our destination, and dipped down with pleasure from its

bleak summits to the bright green plains and silvery lakes of Silva Plana, a village near the western extremity of the Engadine. Thence we directed our course to Pontresina, a village about an hour's walk from Samaden, and as far removed therefore from the main road, which traverses the Engadine longitudinally, north and south, from the Maloya to the Finstermünz.

No guide-book, that I have seen, seems to me to speak with sufficient positiveness of the superior advantages of this beautiful spot, as head-quarters for seeing and enjoying the Engadine. I venture, therefore, to recommend it, in preference to all others, to those who, like ourselves, may go to that part of Switzerland without any very definite notions as to where they ought to fix themselves. They may be tempted, by the reputation and comfort of the bathing establishment at St. Moritz, to stop there, if they can get in; or they may make the mistake of driving, as we at first did, on to Samaden, situated at one of the dreariest-looking and least interesting points of the valley. Both places have the disadvantage of standing on the extreme verge of most of the walks and objects of interest to be visited, and so of doubling the distance and labour of the surrounding excursions; whereas Pontresina is the central point of all

that is most sublime and striking in the scenery of the Engadine.

The site and character of the village itself are most charming and attractive, and exhibit, despite the grandeur of the nature around, a softness and sheltered aspect as unusual as they are highly appreciable in so elevated a locality. Lofty snow-peaks and glaciers descend from elevations of ten and twelve thousand feet high, to lose themselves in bright green meadows and purling brooks, affording endless varieties of walks, alike for the practised and ambitious crags-man, and for him who loves better to saunter the long summer day under the trees, and is content to look up at sublimities which perhaps lose nothing by distance.

Lest this letter should swell to dimensions beyond its object, I will but allude to the superior attractions and interest which Pontresina offers in an historical and ecclesiastical point of view to the traveller. Such reflections can add little, perhaps, to the exquisite natural charms by which the place is surrounded. But one does look with more respect and curiosity at the little cluster of houses, which hang so picturesquely on the green bank above the foaming torrent of the Mortaretsch glacier, when one calls

to mind that this insignificant mountain village can boast of an antiquity of well-nigh a thousand years; that its name recalls a period of highly poetic interest in history long antecedent to the times of chivalry; and that its present religious condition is a striking record of the strength of that fervour for spiritual regeneration, which burst out upon the world from so many different sources and impulses, in the sixteenth century.

The present village of Pontresina was founded somewhere about the year 1200, and its origin is doubtless owing, as its name imports, to some previous settlement or encampment in those parts of those terrible but romantic marauders of Europe, the Moors, or Saracens, of Northern Africa. Descending with their half-regular, half-piratical galleys and forces upon the opposite coast, they filled all the southern seaboard of Europe with consternation, from the Pillars of Hercules to the shores of Dalmatia. A favourite landing-point for incursions by them in the twelfth century was Villafranca, near Nice, at the foot of the Maritime Alps, ascending which, and holding all the passes and bridges, and completely masters of the sea, they laid waste the countries on either slope of the mountains, and possessed always a secure means of retreat from their strongholds when

necessary. Their passage and presence may still be traced far and wide, both by admixture of language and by names given to distant localities; as, for instance, the now well-known Monte Moro, in the Zermatt district, or, to speak more correctly, in the Valley of Saas.

Pontresina, — from *Pons Sarisina*, whence *Ponte Sarraceno*, and the present corrupted name, — formed undoubtedly one of the temporary settlements of these poetical robbers, who, when compelled to abandon it, left the reversion of their possession to the inhabitants of the valley, whom they had reduced partly to subjection, partly to alliance and intercourse. There is a numerous family of the name of Saraz in those parts, in a still existing branch of which their Saracenic origin is said to be yet distinctly traceable, and of which tradition affirms that they were long known in the valley by the distinctive appellation of "the Saracens" *par excellence*, until the origin and almost meaning of the qualification were lost in the present patronymic.

Equally interesting, too, with what may be called their political foundation, is the religious *status* of these otherwise insignificant villagers. They are Protestants, reformed from Papacy by the direct apostleship and instrumentality of a

prelate of their own former Church and persuasion.

There are few names prominently connected with the Reformation, scarcely excepting even that of Luther himself, which have been more polemically treated than the name of Pietro Paolo Vergerio, Roman Catholic Bishop of Capo d'Istria, near Trieste. The fact is explicable enough from his former eminence in the Roman Church, from the bitterness common to almost all the religious controversy of the day in which he lived, and, above all, from the stimulants which he himself applied to his opponents by the perpetual publication of pamphlets, from his own pen, on the weakest and most scandalous points of Romish faith and practice.

Born at Capo d'Istria, in the Venetian territory, about the year 1498, Vergerio was sent by his parents (people of no note themselves, though one of their ancestors is reported to have been the friend and favourite of Petrarch) to study law at Padua, where he took his degree. There also, probably through the great conflux of foreigners usually assembled in that learned city, he first heard of and had his curiosity awakened to the earlier doings of Luther. At all events, he seems to have there first manifested a desire to visit

Wittenberg, and, singularly enough, would have been sent thither as a bearer of relics by the then Elector of Saxony, a great collector of such curiosities, had not a sudden illness prevented him from starting until relics had lost their value, and he his mission.

In 1530, Vergerio went to Rome to join his brother, then Secretary to Clement VII., and was soon admitted to the closest personal intimacy by that Pontiff. He was subsequently despatched as Nuncio to Ferdinand, King of the Romans, to deter that Prince from holding a General Council; and in this negotiation gave such satisfaction to the Pope, that he was entrusted with a similar errand to the Court of the Elector of Saxony. On the accession of Paul III., in 1534, he was again despatched to the Protestant Princes, cities, and even Divines of Germany, to gain their consent to the holding of a Council in Italy; and it was on this occasion that he, at last, went to Wittenberg, and saw and conversed with Luther, to whom he held out every possible inducement to return to the allegiance of the Church of Rome. He was subsequently sent by the Pope to see Charles V. at Naples; and was finally raised to the episcopal dignity, as Bishop of Capo d'Istria, in 1536.

It was not until about 1560, after a journey to

France, and being encouraged by interviews with Vittoria Colonna and the Queen of Navarre, that Vergerio seems to have begun to waver in his allegiance to Rome. But he still had a horror of the name of Protestant, and of dissent from the Church.

Returning to Capo d'Istria, and attempting a purification of his own Church, he soon found his position untenable, and withdrew to his friend Cardinal Souzaya, at Mantua. In 1546 he was obliged to leave Italy, and in 1548 was deprived of his bishopric.

Vergerio is said, about this period, to have been deeply affected by seeing an old friend sink into a hopeless state of insanity, through grief at having abjured the Reformed opinions. He himself soon after took refuge in the Grisons, and found the little church of Vico Soprano, in the Maloya Pass, at that time without a pastor. The inhabitants gladly agreed to receive him among them as such, and to pay him the yearly stipend of 150 crowns.

From this time, Vergerio embraced with ardour the leading principles of religious reformation; and travelling, like a second San Giulio, among the remoter villages of the Alps to reconvert to the faith which had been obscured, he

arrived one day at a small village called *PONTRESINA*, at the foot of the Bernina Chain.

The parish priest of the place had just died, and the whole population of the village were holding an assembly, with their chief magistrate at their head. Vergerio offered to preach to them, and although some objected, the magistrate, more enlightened than the rest, expressed a desire to hear what the stranger had to say. He mounted the pulpit, and preached on the chief doctrines of the Gospel, Justification by Faith and the benefits of Christ's death, with a fervour and eloquence which carried conviction to his hearers both of the truth of the exposition and of the sincerity of the speaker. The small authorities of the place, we are told, the Syndics and Presbyters of Pontresina, having heard him once, entreated him to "stay and preach again." He consented, and such a happy impression did he produce on his hearers, that his teaching resulted in the secession of the entire community from the Church of Rome. With one voice they expressed their desire for further instruction in such doctrines as they had just heard, and one of the reformed ministers, Bartolommeo Silvio, of Cremona, was unanimously requested to settle among them as their pastor.

Vergerio himself consecrated, also, during his

presence among them, the church of Poschiavo, in the Val Settina, not far from Pontresina, and contributed largely to the spread of the reformed opinions in those parts, before he died, about 1561, at Tübingen, whither he had been invited to take up his residence by the Duke of Wittenberg.

We find, however, that Vergerio, in the course of his ministry, had to contend with much opposition from his own converts. Many of them accused him of assuming too much authority, and, delighted with and thinking only of their recent liberation from the yoke of Roman superstition, refused to submit themselves to any regulations or ecclesiastical organization whatsoever. A curious coincidence with the tendencies of many of the reform movements of the present day in Italy, as I shall hereafter have to notice: tendencies, which are at this moment driving Roman Catholics, by the mere force of revulsion, into such extravagances and eccentricities as those of the Plymouth Brethren, and the most advanced forms of ultra-Protestantism.

I am not aware how long Vergerio remained among his converts in the Engadine, or what precise form his apostleship and doctrine there assumed. He himself appears not to have been

personally popular with any of the religious bodies or sects with whom he was thrown into association, after leaving the Church of Rome. One reason of this unpopularity undoubtedly was, that he seems to have been in the habit of asserting openly that he was neither Lutheran, Zwinglian, nor Calvinist, but a Christian; and thus offended the prejudices and lost the support and confidence of all those parties in turn. His own teaching approximated, probably, rather to the more Catholic views of the early Italian, than to the sweeping innovations of the French, German, or Swiss Reformers. But if this were so at first, the ultimate result of the above conversion, or rather perhaps it should be said convulsion, accomplished at Pontresina, as displayed, at this distant interval of time, in the descendants of those among whom it originally took place, appears to be very much the same as what we find every where, except in England, to have been the case, when old religious bonds and foundations have been loosened and overthrown, and nothing of apostolic standing or order left for reconstruction and re-organization.

What may be the particular form of doctrine now in vogue among the ministers of Pontresina, and inculcated by them from the pulpit where Vergerio

first preached the Reformation, I am unable to say with any certainty, because the almost unintelligible Romansch language is the only one there used. But the meagre Services, celebrated only once on a Sunday, at eight o'clock; the closed doors of the church all the rest of that day and throughout the week; the wretched, forlorn, and neglected state of the interior of the fabric itself; the Sacrament niggardly or negligently administered two or three times in the year; the general absence of "things done decently and in order"—all tell the same tale which we invariably learn from Continental Protestantism; all speak of that violent reaction, once accomplished against spiritual abuse, which has finally effected little else than to carry men from the extremes of one form of religious belief and worship to those of another.

Besides, however, the historic and ecclesiastical character and interest above noticed, Pontresina and its neighbourhood possess actual attractions which sufficiently explain and justify the preference accorded to them of late by English tourists.

There is novelty and originality both about the locality and its inhabitants, and their style and mode of life, which are quite refreshing to the eyes and feelings of the many who now ransack

Switzerland in vain for a new sensation. There is scarcely another spot in the world, perhaps, where one can be said so truly to live, not merely among, but absolutely upon, the mountains. For the whole valley is slung, as it were, upon the shoulders of the hills, which bear it up all around like giants, whose snow-crowned heads you have but to make a comparatively moderate further effort in order to reach. Where else, for instance, can you attain an elevation of nigh 11,000 feet, commanding a view of unrivalled extent and dread magnificence, at the cost only of a three hours' walk? And yet this moderate exertion and space of time, of which the last hour only can be called really fatiguing, will place you among the snows and peaks of Piz Languard, and in presence of a scene not generally to be purchased by less than thrice the amount of labour and even peril.

This very proximity of summits, while it gives its peculiar aspect to the scenery, at first almost detracts, by nearness, from its sublimity, until you learn to appreciate by experience the height to which the eye actually reaches, and derive a sort of reflective pleasure from the realization.

The view from Piz Languard is as novel in its

general features as in the mountain range which constitutes its nearest and most prominent object. The less-known, but hardly less sublime, Bernina Chain here takes the place of the Oberland, Mont Blanc, Monte Rosa, and other familiar forms; while the stupendous scene around, or rather beneath you, as you stand on the narrow summit, where there is room only for ten or a dozen spectators, consists not so much of a panorama as of a surface or sea of mountain-crests, over which you seem suspended in dizzy pre-eminence. You look down, rather than around you, upon a globe which seems made only of mountain-billows. You feel as if you were for the moment above every thing. This effect is wholly different from what we experience in such panoramic views as that from the Becca di Nona, or the Grauhaupt (the very finest, perhaps, of all), or from the Görner-Grat itself. I will only add, by way of encouragement, that danger or serious difficulty there is none, in ascending to the great height of Piz Languard. All that is to be taken into consideration in the expedition, especially as concerns ladies, is that the last pitch offers a fatiguing and excessively rough scramble of one or even two hours (according to strength and activity) up rocks and snow. But danger there is none, except that

of being beaten half-way and obliged to give it up. The little tabular space of a few yards among the rocks on the summit is a sort of snuggery where one reposes with great gusto after the stiff pull up. The care (and interest) of the natives has arranged there a moveable bench for the convenience of picnicking, with the addition of a locker and metal cover, in which are deposited a telescope and other articles for the use of visitors making the ascent, and which are expected to be replaced in proper order before descending. I sincerely wish all who may find themselves there, as good a view, and as good an appetite to discuss the morsel of hard beef provided by mine host of the Crown at Pontresina, as those enjoyed on the occasion to which these lines refer.

Almost every one has heard of the enormous houses, which form so striking a feature in the villages of the Engadine. The antiquity of these buildings is often as remarkable as their size. A great number of them bear the date of 1600, and some are even as early as the middle of the preceding century. I saw the date of 1560, or 1565, upon an enormous pile, very highly ornamented and painted outside, and which must have been quite a palace in its way, at so remote a period and in such a position.

The Engadiners, as is known, are greatly given to emigration, and as Inglis and others have long since told us, supply the majority of the pastry-cooks and confectioners of Europe. Inglis records cases in which, if I remember rightly, it resulted from his inquiries, that some of these individuals return to their native village with fortunes of fifty, sixty, and seventy thousand pounds. Their great ambition then seems to be to distinguish themselves by building a house, generally without much regard to style, or site, or position, bigger than that possessed by any of their ancestors or neighbours. These structures rarely exhibit any attempt at architecture, or even ordinary sightliness of proportion. Size seems to be the only, or at least the chief, element aimed at, with a prodigious display of small windows. At first it is difficult to make out what can possibly be contained under roofs often expansive enough to cover a hospital or a barrack. But the fact is, that these enormous edifices contain, in one block, and under one and the same roof, premises which generally compose a whole group of buildings.

The best specimen I saw, however, of this plan of erection was not in the Engadine itself, but in one of the valleys on the Italian side

of the Alps, the Val de Lys, near Gressonay, where the manners of the people, at least as regards emigrating and coming back and building large houses when they have made their fortune, seem to be very similar. A peasant *millionaire*, who had recently returned there, had succeeded in building himself the very biggest house which had ever been seen in his native valley. It was certainly a prodigious structure, outside. But when you went in at this gentleman's front door, expecting to enter only a dwelling-house, you found that his cattle (and very fine cattle, too, with backs straight as a line, and heads a perfect triangle) were placed next to his bedroom, from which you entered his stable, just as you would any other part of his "house." The entire "family" lived under the same roof, in most complete domesticity and confraternity. The arrangement may appear somewhat too patriarchal for modern taste; but any thing more complete of its kind, or more free from the inconveniences one would suppose incidental to it, I never beheld. The stables were patterns of neatness, contrivance, and ingenuity, as were the granaries and storehouses of every description attached to them. But all, live stock and dead stock alike, were lodged together under the same.

roof, which presented outside only the semblance of one vast dwelling-house. "I could live snowed up here for months," said the proprietor to me, "without ever having occasion to stir beyond my own door for any thing." The Engadine houses, when dissected, are found to contain many parts which would elsewhere be distributed as out-houses, but which the severity of their climate makes it convenient and easy to place under one cover. The antiquity of some of the largest houses is a remarkable fact, their construction three hundred years ago by the ancestors of these present owners indicating the existence of wealth which, in such times, appears almost fabulous. It would appear, however, that the art of pastry and confectionery of an ornamental character was even more practised and more highly valued then (as during the reign of Elizabeth, for instance,) than in our own times, and this may account in part for the opulence thus exhibited.

The habit of emigration still continues in the Valley of the Engadine; and so, fortunately, does that also of returning to their native village, thus bringing back the wealth acquired by the roving inhabitants to benefit the original stock. But the spirit of gain is strong upon this thrifty aristocracy; and they are not above profiting by the

circumstances of the times, and turning their big houses to account, now that their country is flooded with visitors. The landlords hire rooms of them to accommodate their too numerous guests; and it is by no means unusual to see the proprietor of the largest dwelling-house, and perhaps the wealthiest man in the village, himself conducting his temporary lodgers home with a lantern in the evening. An old gentleman of Pontresina, who had made his fortune in the course of a thirty years' expatriation at Riga, paid this attention regularly to his guests, in whose society and conversation he appeared to take great pleasure and interest—always for a consideration.

The convenience, however, is great, both to landlords and travellers, in the present circumstances of the Engadine, where accommodation is just now far below the demand. One of my latest reminiscences of the proprietor of the Crown at Pontresina—an easy, good-humoured Italian, who seemed bewildered by the tide of fortune that was setting in upon him—is hearing him exclaim, in a tone between satisfaction and despair, "*Cinquant uno letti*" (fifty-one beds), while he held up ten fingers five times and a thumb once, to indicate the amount of demands for accommodation pouring in by the telegraph. He has more than

doubled his house, and built a *salle-à-manger* of large dimensions, but the cry is still for more room. New establishments, too, seem to be constantly springing up in this hitherto little-visited region. That at Tarasp, near the extremity of the lower Engadine, is the most extraordinary of these in expense and magnitude. A company has laid out a sum, estimated at 60,000*l.*, in the erection there of a vast hotel and bathing-house, portions of which, as for example the public dining-rooms, are got up in a style of magnificence as astonishing as it is uncalled-for in such a remote corner of the world.

The guide-books are generally very deficient in what they say both of this last-named locality and of the Valley generally, or at least above Samaden. I would advise no one to be dissuaded, either by their comparative silence on the subject, or by what may be said by others, from seeing the Valley throughout its whole extent, as far as Tarasp. Not to do so, would certainly be to miss a drive through one of the most charming and varied ranges of scenery of which Switzerland can boast.

LETTER II.

Strength of Feeling for Unity in Italy—State of Parties there—National Party, how Composed—Reactionary Party, Projects of—Causes of Dissatisfaction relied on—Good Sense of Italian People, and their Leaders—Massimo d'Azeglio—Ruggero Boughi—The Army—Its Regenerating Influence.

Florence, Sept. 30th, 1865.

No contrast can be more striking than that presented by the sudden descent, down the Maloya Pass, from the stern regions and yet sterner Protestantism amidst which my first letter was dated, into the exuberant vegetation and demonstrative religious creed of the other side of the Alps. The very eye and feelings alone, apart from more sober judgment and appreciation, seem to assure one that the same religious aspirations cannot suffice, nor the same religious influences prove equally effectual for populations living under such absolutely distinctive natural and climacteric circumstances. Once plunge from the abrupt edge of the high table-land which, sloping almost im-

perceptibly upwards from the lakes of Silva Plana, overhangs the Italian valleys of the other side; and you find man, and the nature around him, become equally expansive. Chestnut-groves of matchless growth and grandeur of form stretch away, far as the eye can reach, over a sea of verdure, amidst which shrines, and crosses, and crucifixes, and wayside chapels seem to find their place and opportunity, altogether in keeping with the luxuriance around them. In such a region you would as soon think of chiding nature for her tangled magnificence, as its human inhabitants for the exhibition of their efflorescent piety. The secret in both cases is, not how to curb, but how to cultivate *rightly;* not how to check, but to turn to best account the latent force with which both are so prodigally endowed.

Unity, change of capital, finance, the elections, Rome, Venetia—the great questions which throng upon one, and rise at once to the eye and ear on entering Italy, are almost bewildering in their extent and magnitude, and make it difficult to decide to which first to give attention. Unity, perhaps, is the sentiment which has been hitherto, and seemingly still is, uppermost in the popular mind, and therefore most demonstrative in its manifestations. Every thing, or any thing, seems

to be made a vehicle for the display and propagation of this one paramount idea.

The earliest instance of a public appeal to the national feeling, which attracted my notice after crossing the frontier, was calculated to impress me favourably with the spirit of its advocates.

I happened to be passing through the interesting little town of Como (too much neglected by the generality of English travellers) at the moment when the ravages of the cholera at Ancona were at their height. The principal inhabitants of the place were just setting on foot a subscription in favour of the sufferers, and had appointed a committee to draw up an appeal to public charity.

The wording of this document was quite a model in its way. Taking advantage of what is understood to be the general sentiment of the country, it began by saying that it was in vain to talk about "unity" without practising it. If the unity of Italy, it said, meant any thing, it meant that the inhabitants of Ancona, from being aliens and almost foreigners, had become fellow-countrymen; and the only way for Italians to show effectually to Europe and the rest of the world that such was really the case, was to come to their assistance in distress. The best sign, it added, of national unity would be the exhibition

of national charity. The committee in question was composed entirely of laymen, and I have since observed the same to be invariably the case at Turin, Milan, and other places where similar steps were being taken.

Here, at Florence, a very urgent address has just been issued to the citizens, calling upon them to join in measures for aiding their suffering countrymen. But the signatures appended to it are all those of members of the laity. The same would hardly, I think, be the case in England, where we are so accustomed to see the names of the clergy, and especially of the Bishops, here so inconceivably absent, associated with every similar movement. Is it that the Romish clergy, especially those of the higher ranks, consider charity in this instance to be too much akin to nationality, and too nearly verging upon another principle for them to take part in it? The walls of Turin, that city of caricatures, were covered with one which seemed an especial favourite, for every where a crowd was collected round it. It represented a ferocious monk preaching to the terrified inhabitants of Ancona, who were assembled shivering with fear around him. He held a small, but formidable-looking little devil in his arms, which the scroll below intimated

he was about to let loose among them, as a punishment for having connived to rob the Pope of a part of his dominions.

To any one passing through the country like myself, the impression conveyed can hardly be other than that the feeling in favour of unity is universal. At least, it is the only one which meets either the eye or the ear of the traveller; and if there be opponents of it, they keep their opposition very much to themselves. It is said, indeed, to be the intention of the reactionary party to come forward once more at the ensuing elections for the national Parliament, and avail themselves of what are called the opportunities and discontent of the moment to regain an influence. If such be their design, the result of the municipal elections, which have just terminated, is far from being an augury to them of future success. Broadly speaking, what may be called the Liberal Conservative party in politics and the moderate Catholic party in religion seems almost every where to have triumphed.

This party embraces many shades of opinion, both as regards Church and State; but it possesses a common character as being the "national party," which accepts frankly the present *régime*, with the principles of unity and religious liberty,

and differs only as to the means and opportunity of working them out. It aspires to form the constitutional majority in the approaching Parliament; and to this title it wisely lays claim in all its electioneering addresses, as forming at once its own common bond and the broad line of distinction between itself and the reactionary Opposition, both lay and clerical. The numerous letters and pamphlets to the electors from Ricasoli, Massimo d'Azeglio, Ferrari, even from Cesare Cantù himself, and others of lesser note, which may be taken as an index of the views of this party, all impress upon the country the necessity of re-forming the mixed majority, which existed, and on the whole voted with remarkable *ensemble* on all vital questions in the first Parliament.

The clerical and reactionary minority, on the contrary, are said to aspire to reverse the present position of parties; and what they seem chiefly to count upon for that object is the partial discontent, or rather disappointment, of the nation on various grounds.

When the elections to the first Parliament took place, the national enthusiasm was at its height, and bore down all attempts at opposition. The feeling for unity was at once so strong and so hopeful, that its adversaries were compelled

to keep silence and stand aside, and the entire nation dreamed only of the immediate fulfilment of all its aspirations. Unity, Rome, and Venice, were the watchwords of almost every candidate who presented himself to the constituencies of the country. But a first Italian Parliament has passed away, and Italy finds herself scarcely a step in advance towards the great objects of her desires.

No doubt disappointment, distrust, and division have to a certain extent been the result, and are counted upon by the adversaries of the national cause. The transfer of the capital, the state of the finances, above all, the necessity for the continual imposition of new taxes, have tended to cool the first fervour of enthusiasm, to make people selfish,—caused them to reckon up the loss and gain to themselves individually of the late changes, calculate how they have been effected by them, and so shaken their allegiance to the former majority. Piedmont and Turin are dissatisfied with their deposition; Tuscany and Florence with the first effects of their elevation. The value of property has, for the moment, fallen largely in the former; the expense of living has increased enormously in the latter; and discontent consequently has arisen in both. It is of this feeling

that advantage is sought to be taken by the party which calls itself "Catholic," but is simply the instrument of the Roman Curia. Its members have been ordered to go to the poll in the late municipal elections, and have done so only to show their weakness. They are said to be preparing for a new attempt on the 22nd October; with what better chance of success we shall learn in the course of the next week or two[1].

[1] The result of the Italian elections, as is well known, was the return of an overwhelming majority, composed of the two parties designated as moderate and advanced Liberals. It is the equal balance of these two parties, made more equal by the ill-humour and partial defection of the Piedmontese deputies, and by the struggle between the latter and the Tuscan *consorteria*—or clique, as it is termed—which succeeded Ratazzi and his followers in power,—it is to these circumstances, and not to any strength or impediments of the reactionary party, that the recent difficulties of the Italian Government (in January, 1866), and partial reconstruction of the Cabinet, have been owing. But the discomfiture and repudiation of the Roman party by the country, in the elections, was unanimous and complete, not more than some ten or fifteen avowed members of that party being elected, and that under circumstances than which, to use the words of Massimo d'Azeglio which are quoted below, "it was impossible to imagine a greater liberty of choice." Above all, this discomfiture was remarkable in Tuscany, where the clerical party was supposed to find its stronghold amongst the small landed proprietors, or *noblesse*, and the *contadini*, or peasantry of their estates. There were nineteen cases, out of

Meanwhile it cannot escape the attention of the most ordinary observer, that there is much in the aspect of the political movement at present going on in Italy, which is calculated to raise a favourable impression of the nation and those who pretend to direct it. The language addressed by the leading men of the country to their constituencies, or to the people at large, on the subject of the elections and the duties which devolve upon the latter in consequence, is generally of a character which reflects credit on both parties. It is impossible not to feel that the men who so think and write are guided by great practical good sense, and that they have confidence in what they say being appreciated by those whom it is intended to influence. After having been long accustomed to read the

the thirty-one electoral colleges of Tuscany, in which the clerical candidates were in a sufficiently good position, after a first ballot, to claim the chance of a second trial, in competition with a Liberal. In the other twelve colleges the second contest lay only between two Liberals. Out of the nineteen cases above mentioned, the clerical party were finally successful only in *two;* and even one of these was in the person of a candidate who is likely to vote as often with the moderate Liberals as with the party who put him forward. The defeat was, therefore, in every respect crushing and decisive, and demonstrative beyond contradiction of the feelings entertained by the intelligent classes of the country towards the papal system and its supporters.

effusions of French politicians on similar occasions, and that in times when liberty of speech was unrestricted, as well as the contrary, one is struck by the sounder views which are here exhibited, and, above all, by the far more practical tone in which they are expressed. Nowhere, not even in England, or the country most exercised in wielding political rights or passing through critical periods, could popular enthusiasm and exaggeration be more tempered by prudence and moderation. The wonder is, where these men and the nation they speak to got their education in such matters, cramped as they have been, almost for centuries, by petty domestic rulers or foreign interference. There must really be the stuff in Italy to make, or rather re-make, both great men and a great people; and this impression breaks upon one far more on the spot than at a distance, and from the language of Italians as well as from their acts.

Europe, indeed, has been compelled of late years to give the Italian people credit for steadiness, patience, perseverance, self-control, even self-denial, and many such qualities as they were least supposed to possess. When among them, you see more clearly the sources from which such conduct springs, and the

considerations and counsels by which it is dictated. At the present moment, the press teems with addresses, exhortations, warnings of all sorts, from men of eminence to their fellow-countrymen, on the course they ought to pursue in the elections; and it is not too much to say, that by far the greater portion of these publications is marked by sound judgment and discretion.

Amongst the most popular and authoritative, perhaps, of them, is the *Letter to the Electors*, by the veteran Massimo d'Azeglio, of which several editions are now in circulation. The old statesman speaks to his countrymen, from his retreat, with his usual freedom and vivacity, now railingly, now kindly, now seriously. Up, he says, O Italians! Now is the time to apply the famous maxim, *L'Italia fa da sè*. Providence has done much for us, it is true; miracles, perhaps. But don't let us dispute about the proportion which is due to each. "The fact is, that, at the present juncture, the enterprise is wholly and solely in the hands of Italians themselves, and of the electors." Let there be no mistake, nor excuses, nor pretexts, he adds, on this head. The game is in the hands of the players, and if they lose it, it is only because they have not known how to play it. The new Legislature will be simply the measure

of the good sense, sagacity, and patriotism of the electors; and if they go wrong they will have no excuse, for the elections await them in the midst of liberty the most absolute, of profound tranquillity, without fears or pressure from without, free from impediment or disturbance from any quarter or any person, and with abundance of data, and of light and examples derived from other people. "In truth," he says, "it is impossible for me to imagine any cause which can affect the free operation of the choice which is about to be made."

Therefore, he continues, if Italy does not now show herself a great nation; or at least, with her recent unhoped-for fortunes, if foreigners can still throw in the faces of Italians the national blemishes—which he declines to recapitulate, but of which none are ignorant—then, he says, let us have no more of the old excuses, that "Austria will not let us breathe," that "our Satraps keep us down," that "it is the King of Naples, the Duke of Modena, the Pope, the police, the censorship, the spies, the Jesuits." It will be none of all these. Do you know what it will be? he asks. Do you know what we shall have to say ourselves, and hear others say, that it has been? That Italians are incapable of self-government—

nay, that so far from being all-sufficient to *fare da sè*, they are not even advanced enough to receive liberty at the hands of others!

But after this plain speaking, he expresses great faith in the national feeling. What has been done in Italy, during the last five years, could never have been accomplished without a general and unanimous sentiment of patriotism—"We derive, too, immense help from the good sense of the population." He is not one of those who flatter the people by always telling it that it is infallible. But, "I know," he says, "the Italian people of every province of the kingdom as well as any one can know them, and I know that the foundation is good at bottom." The Italian population has a respect for authority, and every day a greater respect for the law. What is a capital point, he adds, is that, with certain exceptions, "Italians pay well." Foreigners laughed at anticipated taxation as a ministerial farce. But the anticipated land-tax was nevertheless paid in hard cash, and the subscription to the last loan was an equally strong national demonstration.

Another remarkable electoral letter, which has sprung out of the above, is that of the Neapolitan Deputy Ruggero Bonghi, well known for his comparative work on English and Italian finance, and

other similar publications. Here, also, we find the same plain speaking and common sense, which reflect credit upon the writer and the people whom he addresses. The financial question, in his eyes, is the most important of all for Italy. For, he says, a nation, like a private person, has no other mode of avoiding ruin but that of not spending more than it has. Now, of the last four years, there are two in which Italy has spent twice as much as her receipts, and in the present year she will probably spend one and a half as much. But to count only upon 600 millions of revenue and spend 900, is a process which never can answer in the long run. Must, then, a deputy be now elected on the understanding that he is to consent to the imposition of new taxes? "All I know," says Sig. Bonghi on the eve of a new election, "is, that this difference between income and expenditure must cease."

But he will not hear of a reduction in the army or navy capable of injuring their efficiency, because "Italy must be ready to act when the hour comes," and because the army "is almost the only means we possess of bringing the name of Italy before the eyes of the lowest classes of the population, and the instrument best adapted for their education."

There is great and generally recognized truth in the last remark. All persons allow that the army, its discipline, its very appearance, is one of the great regenerating influences of Italy, and hardly inferior in that respect to schools and railroads themselves. The modern Italian of the lower class, besides his want of the perception of nationality, is, above all, become what the French term *moux*—soft, sluggish, lethargic, immoveable. He wants rousing, shaking up, inspiriting. Look at these fellows marching along the quays of Florence every morning with the Italian trumpets, the merriest and most cheerful of all trumpets, at their head. Would you believe they were the countrymen of the lounging crowd, who gape on them as they pass? The little fellows, for unfortunately they are *very* little, and slight and loose-jointed besides, except the *bersaglieri* and a few others, step out so jauntily and look so gay, that at last, with the additional attraction of their music, they draw the idle loiterers along with them, and warm them up into something like motion and spirit. They run after them and read *esercito Italiano* upon the military equipages, and the words bring home to them, like magic, the great idea of the Italian people, with a force that nothing else could im-

part. Activity, order, discipline, cleanliness, punctuality, the value of time, these are qualities and knowledge which the Italian population want above all others, and which the army can teach most quickly and on the largest scale. If the whole people could be passed through its ranks for three years, more would be accomplished towards unity and nationality than perhaps by any other process which could be devised in so short a time.

LETTER III.

Distinctive Character of Italian Cities — Turin — Milan — Florence — Change of Capital — Upper Classes of Florence — Ordinary Population — Unsuitability of City and Inhabitants for Capital — Influx of Population — Contemplated Changes — Confusion and Expense attending them.

Florence, Oct. 11th, 1865.

Most of the Italian cities, and above all those which I have recently passed through, have a distinguishing character, peculiar to themselves and their inhabitants.

Thus, Turin, for example, is marked by its sobriety and regularity of aspect, which seem to belong to it both morally and materially,—at once to its straight, well-built, and convenient streets, and to its straight-minded, firm, and thoughtful population. There is much in Turin and the Turinese, which reminds one of England or America; in the modern aspect and modern tone of thought, which prevail; in the

thoroughly political feeling, the sturdy vein of patriotism; above all, in the determination to exercise at all times the liberty of free citizens, without abusing it. The city has just given a remarkable instance of this latter quality.

The Turinese are at this moment deeply wounded in their dearest interests and feelings. But though they have suffered most severely in fortune, they are nobly, even proudly, resigned, proud of the sacrifice they have made for the common country. In the sad events of September, 1864, they were cruelly but, I believe, most unintentionally wronged, and the blood of a number of their fellow-citizens spilt by that very Government, almost by that very King, for whose sake they were submitting to be deposed from their hereditary rank as a capital. Well, when the anniversary of the fatal 22nd of September came round again for the first time, the inhabitants of Turin were desirous of showing, by a public commemoration, their respect, at once, for the memory of the victims of that day, and their own resolute maintenance of their political rights. But as soon as ever this design was announced, they found themselves placed between two fires: on one side the Government, in alarm, entreated the municipal authorities to stifle in its birth a demonstration which

looked like an accusation against itself, and might lead to public disturbances; and on the other side, the movement and ultra-radical party prepared to take advantage of the popular excitement for their own ends and purposes.

The King actually went to Turin in person, to endeavour to avert an act which might be construed as a tacit reproach against himself. The movement party, on the contrary, plastered the walls with programmes of what they thought the intended commemoration ought to be, and according to which the old cries of "*Roma o morte,*" and "Instant war for Venice," were once more to be blended with speeches and orations of the most go-ahead character.

Now, what did the firm, but judicious Turinese do under these circumstances? The Government shall neither prevent us, they said, from exercising our rightful privileges and respecting the memory of those whom it unjustly made victims, nor will we allow ourselves to become the tools of demagogues and fanatics. We will have our commemoration, but it shall be a religious one, as befits the memory of the dead, and there shall be neither speeches nor speechifying. The heads of the moderate party drew up accordingly a programme, by which the proceedings were

limited to a solemn religious service beneath the portico of the principal church, and to a procession to the tombs of the victims of the 22nd of September, on which *immortelles* were to be placed. The entire city rallied, at once, to this sober and judicious proposition. The Government itself offered the co-operation of the official authorities, army, and National Guard. The religious ceremony took place, with imposing effect, beneath the portico of the Church of the Grand Madre di Dio. The long procession of Trades and Associations defiled through the Piazza Vittore Emmanuele and the Via di Po, in which all the shops were closed. Public tranquillity was never disturbed for a moment. The Government was taught a lesson, and the provokers to violence were rebuked by the good sense of the population. Such are the Turinese.

Of a wholly different aspect and character are the Milanese and their bright and brilliant city, the Queen of Lombardy.

No contrast can well be greater than that which the one presents to the other, nor any change more striking than to pass suddenly from the sombre arcades of the Strada di Po and its thoughtful-looking, business-like politicians and men of action, to the light gaiety, bustle,

brilliant shops, and easy-going flaneurs of the Corso Vittore Emmanuele and the glorious marble pile by which it is terminated. The Milanese are a rich, luxurious, money-loving, and money-spending people, proud of themselves, their city, their wealth, their prosperity, and their self-sufficiency. They are delightful to be amongst —for a short time—they are so gay, happy, courteous, good-humoured, and so exquisitely well-bred. Above all, they are so delighted to be free. You may read in every man's face the proud satisfaction he feels in the general emancipation.

Milan is a city in which the aristocracy of hereditary rank and position, and large landed possessions, is admirably blended with the aristocracy of the banking and financial world. The one reacts favourably upon the other, and the two united give to the entire city and its inhabitants that mingled *cachet* of elegance and opulence; which is their peculiar characteristic. I have seen nothing in any country more brilliant than the society of Milan, of all classes; and nowhere, perhaps, can it be seen together to more advantage than when assembled, on a gala night, in that most chaste and elegant of all opera-houses, La Scala.

I amused myself when last there, almost to the extent of forgetting what was going on around me, with conjuring up the wonderful scene which must have been exhibited when Louis Napoleon and Victor Emmanuel, crowned with the laurels of Magenta, presented themselves to the enthusiastic assembly, after the great victory which opened the road to the allied armies to the capital of Lombardy. They had entered one gate of Milan, as the hated Austrians went out at the other. The long-waited-for hour of liberation and triumph had come at last, and Milanese enthusiasm must have known no bounds. For your Milanese is a tremendous enthusiast, and if he could have driven out the *Tedeschi* by merely shouting "*Viva l'Italia!*" and "*Viva la Patria!*" it would have been long since done. The Milanese are charming, both male and female; the latter so stately and seductive with their *grand air*, the former so polite and gentlemanly in tone, dress, and manner. But—I ask the question *sotto voce*, as I often asked it of myself—will these people quit themselves like men, in difficult times? Will they fight for Italy, when the hour of action comes, as well as shout "*Viva l'Italia?*" Alas! for the chivalrous Carlo Alberto and the gallant Piedmontese who fought and fell *alone* at

Novara! I fear the latter would smile and shake their heads at the above question, and reply to it by asking in their turn, Who, as yet, have done all the fighting in Italy, as far as Italians are concerned?

But the Milanese are a spirited people, a real credit and ornament to the country, and are now going ahead at a great pace. Their population is said to have increased by some fifty thousand, since the annexation. Their nobles and men of wealth, who sulked and closed the doors of their palaces during the Austrian ascendancy, now really live and entertain their fellow-citizens with princely hospitality. The municipality, which formerly grudged every sixpence extorted from it by its military rulers, now shrinks from no sacrifice to beautify and embellish its native capital. The town is a pattern of cleanliness and good order. The weather was intensely hot when I was there; but before half-past five in the morning every street, and the public gardens as well, had been profusely watered, and the care displayed to remove every thing injurious to health, or which could increase the risk of cholera, was most praiseworthy. Of the political spirit which prevails in the city it is almost needless to speak. The

sentiment in favour of unity is absolutely universal. A fine statue of Cavour has just been inaugurated in the centre of a new *place* of the same name, and the portraits and eulogy of the great minister and of the King *galant' uomo* meet your eyes and ears in every direction.

After Turin and Milan comes Florence, with, again, a peculiarly distinctive character of its own, both as to its population and external appearance.

The experiment, which is at present being tried, of attempting to convert this thoroughly mediæval city, with its literary, artistic, quiet, easy-going, gossiping population, into the capital of a great modern military kingdom of thirty millions of souls, is one of which it is far easier to appreciate the difficulties than to predict the success. Certainly, with the exception of being placed beyond the reach of a military *coup de main*, it is difficult to discover in Florence, or the Florentines, any qualities which peculiarly fit them for the position which has been thrust upon them.

The immediate effect of the transformation has been to throw them into a chaos of moral, social, and material disorganization, such as must be witnessed in order to be fully understood. It was observed to me by one of the oldest and most

experienced resident men of business in the place, that the change, both in its present aspect and future contingencies, was such as to defy all reasonable foresight or calculation as to its results; and that he now found himself as completely a stranger in his native city, as myself or any other visitor who had just arrived there. All London, or all Birmingham, suddenly poured into Oxford could scarcely have produced a greater shock to the academic shades of Alma Mater, than the infusion of the official, diplomatic, parliamentary, political, financial, and even fashionable life of New Italy, into such a city as Florence. And it is easy to conceive, from the previous circumstances and position of the place and its inhabitants, that such must necessarily have been the case.

The Florentine noble or gentleman who inherits, as so many of them do, a moderate real estate in the Val d'Arno or the Apennines, lets it out on the *métayer* system to the *contadini*, who till it, and having done so, considers, for the most part, that his duty as a public man and a landed proprietor is at an end. He is rarely a hard or exacting landlord, and is, indeed, usually willing to allow himself to be cheated, in one way or another, out of much more of his revenue than

the one-half which is stipulated to go to his tenant for cultivation, provided only he is left to enjoy the remaining portion in undisturbed ease and tranquillity. But changes of system, innovation, or improvements of his private estate, any more than of the *res publica*, are for the most part irksome to him, and subjects to which he can rarely be brought to give a serious attention. He is fond of art, as a matter of course, and generally considers himself born a connoisseur. He reads, too, in a dilettante sort of way, and is interested in, and frequently well informed respecting the antiquities of his native town. Above all, he likes society, as he understands it, but indulges in it much oftener at a *café*, the cascine, and especially at the Opera, than either in his own or his friends' houses. He will stand for hours, as every passing sojourner at Florence must have observed, in the streets or before the Doney, with his hands behind him, among his friends, talking, what in Turin certainly, and in Milan very probably, would be politics, but in Florence may be nothing but the last witticism of the day, or the latest discovered portrait of Dante.

But of public life and action, as understood and practised in a free country and under a constitu-

tional government, he knows or cares little or nothing, and has yet both to imbibe the taste and acquire the knowledge. In political science, he is far below the man of similar rank in Turin. In financial speculation and experience, he cannot for a moment compete with the members of the aristocratic banking world of Milan; and he is far inferior in commercial acumen to the active merchant of Genoa and Naples. In short, the Florentine upper classes are gentlemen, in the social sense of the term, rather than men of the world, politicians, or men of business, and, as such, better adapted for the amenities of private life, than to form the nucleus of political society in a great capital.

It is needless, of course, to remark that such a description is only meant to be general, and that it would be easy to instance particular names in glaring contradiction to such a portraiture.

The character of the ordinary population is very much what might be expected from this complexion of the upper classes, and the circumstance of the city being the resort of a large foreign and fluctuating population. Eager tradesmen, and men of business in a small way, abound; but the spirit of commercial or financial enterprise, in the

higher acceptation of the term, is almost wholly wanting.

The staple commodities of the place are, still, silk and the well-known straw-plait called Tuscan, but fabricated, in reality, within a small circle round the city. A singular circumstance, with respect to the latter production, was related to me by Colonel Lawrence, the highly intelligent Consul-General of the United States in Italy. By far the largest demand for the article used to be made by America. Straw-plaits, of an ordinary quality, were shipped thither in very large quantities. After being made up into hats in Connecticut, these were sent down into the Southern States, and there almost universally worn by the plantation negroes. The late war put an entire stop to the demand, and reduced to great poverty entire villages around Florence, formerly occupied in the manufacture of this article.

But, with such trifling exceptions as the above, the main occupation of the middle and lower classes consists in supplying the wants of their superiors, and of their numerous foreign visitors.

If the population of Florence is little suited for the change which has come upon it so unexpectedly, the city itself is assuredly still less so.

Its present position and future fate can scarcely, indeed, be viewed without a feeling of apprehension altogether unconnected with the political question, by those who have long remembered and known it as it was and is. Certainly, to convert Florence into the modern capital of a great kingdom is not simply to change, it is to destroy her. The evidences of the contemplated destruction are, even already, becoming only too apparent. Streets are being widened to meet the exigencies of increasing trade and population, and façades, long historical, are disappearing to make way for less picturesque, but far more lucrative elevations. But such things cannot be, and Florence long remain what she is, or retain the character which has hitherto proved her chief attraction. As one palace shall be modernized and transformed after another, the city will become common-place without becoming vast or brilliant, in the modern sense of the term. Already, even without such changes, Florence loses by comparison with her past and present position. Grand, as the capital of a small duchy, she is insignificant when viewed as the capital of a first-rate power. One instinctively makes the application, and feels disappointed at the mere disproportion. For every thing is really on a small scale in Florence, except in comparison with

herself. The very palaces, huge as they appear in her narrow streets, are as nothing compared with the masses we are now accustomed to in London or Paris. There is not a street in Florence, with the single exception of the Via Larga, now re-christened Via Cavour, fitted to receive the tide of a great population. All must be enlarged, and to enlarge, as has been said, is, in this case, simply to destroy.

As yet, however, but little change has taken place in the external appearance of the city from what it was twenty or five-and-twenty years ago. Its grand old feudal palaces, with their barred windows and overhanging roofs reaching into the middle of the street, and affording, as they were intended to do, a most agreeable shade, still exist in their pristine form, and constitute the chief features of the city. Of no place, indeed, can it be so truly said as of Florence, that its public edifices consist mainly of its private houses. Deprived of these relics of past wealth and greatness, the city would entirely lose its peculiar character. Such mansions, which were in reality fortresses, in which the great nobles of the middle ages, who headed alternately some one of the religious or political parties of the day, ensconced themselves, to carry on war sometimes against each other,

sometimes against the people, are instructive monuments and tangible evidences of the disturbed state of society in those times, even in cities. Now Florence, as a city, is half composed of these piles, which meet you at every step, towering up in gigantic square masses, and seeming to frown defiance upon modern innovation and improvement. It seems almost sacrilege, to meditate transforming these venerable relics of a past age into plate-glass windows and shops flaring with gas-lights. And yet it is evident that the narrow streets, or rather alleys, in which so many of them stand, flagged right across, and without a vestige of footpath, such as prevail all over Florence, can never suffice for the tide of circulation and business inevitable to a great modern capital. There are said to be some fifteen thousand people, of official and semi-official character alone, to be transplanted bodily from Turin and provided for, besides the incongruous host of nameless individuals, who are sure to follow in the train of a Court and a Government.

Meanwhile, it is absolutely necessary to do something, or appear to do something, at once, if only to give an air of permanence to the political act which is being accomplished. So

the Municipality, with the sanction of the Government, has entered into a contract with an English Company, which, for a consideration of three millions of francs and a large grant of land, is to pull down bodily the old and picturesque but incommodious walls, convert them into Boulevards, and surround them by new streets, squares, and avenues. More than five thousand new residences are to be erected within the next three years, under heavy penalties for failure.

The existing state of things is, in the mean time, one of great confusion, discomfort, expense, and uncertainty, morally, materially, socially, and politically. In their hearts, the people do not believe that Florence will remain permanently the capital of Italy, and therefore they are unwilling to rush into building and other speculations, and burn their fingers like the unfortunate Turinese. The consequence is, that the price of house-rent, living, and of every article of expenditure, has, in many cases, more than doubled, or rather has come to have no fixed standard at all. Houses have been pointed out to me, which now let for as many thousand francs, as they formerly did hundreds. The vast majority of the upper classes in Florence being people of fixed incomes, mostly derived, as has been said, from small landed

estates, the effect of the enormous increase of expense on these unexpansive fortunes has been most onerous, and, coupled with the constant augmentation of taxes, has created of course much discontent.

Among the many insufficiencies of Florence, as a capital, may be especially noticed that of her bridges. There is not one, even of the few which exist, at all fitted for the traffic of a large and populous city. That now in view of me as I write, and which forms the principal access to the town from the south, is only twenty feet wide, though the length is near two hundred yards, without footways of any kind, a sort of stone trough, in short, flagged right across, like all the streets in Florence, and quite dangerous, from its high pitch, for horses and carriages, which are required to stop and put on the drag (in a crowded thoroughfare!) every time they cross it. Pedestrians are mixed up pell-mell with vehicles, and every sort of animal of the brute creation, pigs, mules, sheep, and oxen; and the scene on a market-day, though amusing and picturesque in a high degree when seen from a window or at a distance, becomes any thing but agreeable on a closer juxtaposition with it.

But if the confusion in the streets of Florence

is great, consequent upon the daily increasing population and traffic, the confusion in the ministries and public offices of all kinds is far greater. It is within the experience of every one probably to know what it is to "move" a family; but few, who have not seen it, can picture to themselves what it is to move a capital. I certainly never could have imagined what it entailed, had I not visited some of the interiors where the process was going on—the piles of paper, furniture, fixtures, and materials of all sorts, are perfectly indescribable. How an Italian Minister of the Interior, or Finance, has ever got through the necessary labour of his office, or found it possible to transact public business during the period of transition, it seems almost impossible to understand. One day, through the kind favour of the Government architect, I was permitted to view the grand hall and other portions of the Palazzo Vecchio, preparing for the Deputies, and that in the Uffizzi for the Senate, while the various necessary changes were taking place. I there witnessed the pile upon pile of materials connected with the Houses of Parliament alone, which had arrived and were arriving continually from Turin. Then only did I realize fully the amount of even material difficulty connected with the undertaking in

which Italy is engaged, and was tempted to exclaim, almost in despair, "This it is, then, to 'change a capital!'" The process is said already to have cost the country nearly two millions sterling.

LETTER IV.

The Religious Question in Italy — Its Difficulties — Considerations as to its probable Issues—Present Aspects of Romanism — Increase of Mariolatry — The Passaglia Movement — Its apparent Failure — Clerical Immorality and Abuses — A Florentine Funeral described — Its Painful Features.

Florence, October 14th, 1865.

THE question of the religious condition and prospects of Italy is one which can only be approached with great diffidence by the passing traveller. It is so easy to mislead oneself on the subject, to be misled, often unintentionally, by others; so difficult to obtain any information which can be implicitly depended on. At best, the only results to be obtained, except by a long-protracted residence, are those derivable from one's own necessarily crude observation and the balance, to the best of one's judgment, of the almost universally conflicting statements of other people. Sweeping assertions, the most startling accusations, are, indeed, put forth most plenti-

fully, both verbally and in print. There are one or two volumes filled with such just now in large circulation here; and there is no end to the "well-authenticated" stories of the same character, which are daily proffered to the temporary sojourner.

But religion and religious feelings are far more subtle things to deal with than politics, or even diplomacy, although the latter prides itself so much on its powers of mystification; and when you try to seize and sift them in order to measure their weight and quality, the whole matter seems to elude your grasp and defy your efforts at real estimation. For the most part general impressions alone remain, based often upon personal observation, communications and incidents too numerous and varied even to remember, much less to recapitulate. These conclusions are sometimes satisfactory enough, so far as oneself is concerned, and carry with them a strong moral certainty and conviction; but they are seldom sufficient either to convince others, or to warrant the open and heavy charges which are too often made on their authority.

Judging of the religious state of Italy by the imperfect light, and speaking of it under the restraints, above intimated, I should be inclined

to say that the entire question resolves itself into these three considerations—first, will religious reformation, or regeneration, or enlightenment, or by whatever name you like to call it, come to Italy, humanly speaking, from above—that is, from the upper classes, from the small amount of educated lay intelligence which the country yet possesses, and from the so-called Liberal section of the clergy themselves ?—in which case it would be almost certain to assume, more or less, the form which most English Churchmen would wish to see it take. Or, secondly, will the innovating spirit work from below, and in that case democracize religion also, in accordance with the predominating influences of modern society, at least on the Continent ?—in which case, doubtless, presbyteral forms, in one shape or other, will be preferred to hierarchical. Or, lastly, will reactionary influences and circumstances prevail, and existing combinations either be dissolved or remain in a dead-lock, and religious expectations be disappointed as well as political ?

These seem to be the considerations, which naturally present themselves to the attention of the observer in Italy. But when the question is thus stated, the inquirer feels himself brought at once almost to a standstill, so small are the

data left him to advance upon, so little has there been yet done towards a solution of his doubts. Italy has evidently not yet made up her own mind; how can any one decide for her what it will be? She has scarcely yet entertained the subject of religious reformation at all, certainly not seriously, nor as a nation.

As far as the masses are concerned, it is easy to perceive that things are just as they were long ago, or rather worse. What we think ourselves justified in calling superstition is more rife than ever, and more openly paraded before the eye. There can be no mistake about that; you have but to look around to be convinced of the fact, and there need be no hesitation about asserting it. All other altars are deserted for the favourite one, and the *Credo* of the people, so far as their religious practice is concerned, might just as well be reduced to a single tenet.

Even on a Sunday, it is observable that High Mass itself no longer commands the attendance it once did, but has come to be regarded as something almost *rococco*, and is neglected for a newer and more attractive Divinity. At the Cathedral of Florence, High Mass now often goes forward at the grand altar in presence only of a few curious strangers or lookers-on. The officiating

priests themselves seem to be quite conscious that they have lost their audience on such occasions, and to feel as though they were going through a form that had become well-nigh obsolete. Nothing can exceed the rapidity with which the Office is conducted. The vast band of performers wheel about with the celerity and precision of a *corps de ballet;* and the business is got through, and the long procession files off into the sacristy and disappears, in a way not at all usual with Roman Catholic ceremonies which are still in vogue. The impression conveyed is, that this most solemn celebration of divine worship and chief observance of the Sunday is fallen very low in popular estimation, and that the officiators are aware of it, and get through the prescribed ritual as fast as possible, as actors through a worn-out piece.

Meanwhile, however, at precisely the same hour and on the same day, the chapel of the Virgin, which stands immediately behind the neglected chief altar, is blazing with lights and thronged with devotees of all classes and sexes, though chiefly females; and if you take your stand for a time by the marble screen which encircles the high altar, beneath Brunelleschi's noble dome, you will see that the entire tide of congrega-

tion, ladies of the highest fashion as well as the humblest *contadina*, including such men as enter the church—all, almost without exception, pass by the principal service, even as it is going on, and join the more popular assemblage on the other side.

Such facts as these, as well as a thousand other similar indications of the direction in which all religious feeling sets, are daily before the eye, and are as undeniable as the deductions which may be legitimately drawn from them.

What one hears of priestly corruption, and above all of priestly extortion, in this country, is of such a character that nothing short of the minutest investigations and strictest analysis of each story would justify its reproduction. But both the origin and the variety of the information received on this head are sufficient to produce a strong conviction, in one's own mind, of the truth of much that is asserted. That the whole body of the Italian clergy are, as allowed to me by more than one of themselves, trained up in systematic opposition and hostility to the existing order of things, to the Government and national will, is what none of them probably would consider to be a crime, or even a fault. That it is entirely true of them, I believe to be

the case, with the exception of a very small minority, and despite Passaglia's nine thousand signatures, of dubious authenticity perhaps, and at all events, as circumstances have since gone far to show, of small weight.

It seems scarcely credible, indeed, that so large a band, if it had ever really existed, and were sincere and in earnest, should have proved so completely null in its effects and operation on its own Church or on the nation at large, as has evidently been the case. Passaglia himself, so far as I can learn by the expression of trustworthy opinion, stands very low in the estimation of the more enlightened men of the country. He is looked upon as a mere pedant, though a learned one; and considered, at best, as only a scholastic divine; but altogether incapable, even if inclined, which is very doubtful, of assuming the part of leader in a really liberal and reformatory Church movement. The obscurity and neglect into which he has fallen himself personally, and the absolute nonentity of his followers as a body, seem to afford strong proof that the above estimation of both the one and the other is correct.

Much that one hears of the immorality of the Roman clergy in Italy is of too *scabreux* a nature to be further alluded to. The charges of spiritual

tyranny, and of extortion in the confessional and on the death-bed, I have heard, I think, brought home to them, by special instances, in a way to justify much that has been lately said of ecclesiastical cupidity, both in the French Senate and the pages of *Le Maudit*. The habitual extortion of sums of money, either paid down at once to the Religious Order of which the confessor is a member, or left to support masses, does, certainly, seem to be a well-authenticated practice, and to be continually the cause of strong animosity between the surviving members of a family and the spiritual directors of those who are deceased. The temptation in the shape of masses is dangerously personal, for the advantage is immediate and direct. The priest, who perhaps has no other employment or resource, goes to the church in which the mass has been founded through his own instrumentality, performs the rite, enters the sacristy, where a regular day-book is kept, makes the entry—"one mass so much,"—receives his pay, and is provided for for the day. Very few Italian priests or friars are, I apprehend, indifferent to such opportunities, and the advantages to be derived from them.

Great complaints are made of the extortions practised in respect to fees, especially those for

burying the dead. It may no doubt be replied to this charge, as I at first replied to it myself, by saying that there is a fixed tariff for such things. But, not to speak of the fears and ignorance of the lower classes, it appears that there arises in almost every case a need or a desire for some trifling exception (like in a builder's contract) which leaves room for an open arrangement, and then a very hard bargain is driven.

A strong case was related to me, and that on Catholic authority, of a poor man from whom all he had in money had been exacted for the funeral of one member of his family, according to his wishes, and we all know to what extent the poor will go in such matters. Another death occurred in the same family; a similar demand was made, and the answer given that it was simply impossible to comply with it: "You can sell your furniture," said the priest.

I give the story (out of many others) as it was told to me by one too estimable to say any thing he did not believe to be correct.

But not to insist too much on the payment of funerals, I wish to say a few words on the mode of their performance, sometimes, by the Romish Church in this country. The practice, in both

respects, is such as to make one remember with satisfaction the well-regulated exactness with which the same things are managed by the civil authorities in France, in all that is material in them, leaving only the sacred functions to the clergy.

It so happened that almost immediately after my arrival in Florence, I felt bound to offer to attend the funeral of a Roman Catholic friend. The ceremony was fixed for just after dusk, at which time I proceeded to the house where it was to take place. I found there only two or three of the very nearest relatives of the deceased, but no other connexions or friends of the family; and the feeling for a moment was common between myself and another Englishman present, that we were almost *de trop* in our well-meant attention. But the nature of the ceremony, as it proceeded, explained and excused the paucity of this attendance. Immense lighted tapers were first placed in our hands, and with about a dozen other persons similarly provided, we descended the large stone staircase of the Palazzo in which we were.

Presently the body was brought down, carried only on a large open cloth, and quite exposed to view, with cap and sandalled shoes, in the usual

dress worn by the deceased, who was a lady. The sight was unpleasant, but as such appears to be the custom of the country, there is nothing more to be said. When laid on the bier, or truck, a large black cover was placed over the corpse, the great gates were thrown open, and we proceeded, tapers in hand, into the streets.

I think I shall never forget the disgusting impressions of that moment, and of the walk to the neighbouring church. On issuing out, we were instantly surrounded by a crowd of the lowest rabble of the population, whom there was no attempt to keep off, and amongst whom figured, pre-eminent for activity and audacity, a whole army of *gamins*, with large sheets of folded paper in their hands. The object of these imps was to obtain a post beside a candle-bearer, and to be allowed to catch the wax as it dripped, in order to sell it again to "the Church." As they were far more numerous than the tapers, regular fights ensued as to who should have the preference, and this without any regard to the unfortunate object of dispute himself, whose feelings of decorum and sense of common decency were utterly disturbed and outraged by the squabble, while his clothes were generally covered with the wax which was the cause of it. The grinning mob which pursued us

seemed to think that this scandalous scene constituted the "fun" of a funeral; and none of the religious staff made any attempt to put an end to it. They appeared to take it quite as a matter of course, and as a very laudable zeal displayed to save the Church's wax. At first, one was disposed to kick out right and left at these tormentors; but by and by, prudence, if not taste, dictated the better plan of allowing one of them to install himself in possession, in order to get rid of the others. But even then, the eagerness and grimaces of the urchin so favoured were sufficient to banish gravity, as he strove in every way to make the most of his chance, now looking you full in the face, to see how far he might venture to go as he touched your arm and sloped your taper to make it run faster from its half-dozen wicks, now throwing a broad grin of satisfaction to a comrade, in token of the good drip and the pliable victim he had got hold of. When I add that in front of me walked an irascible countryman, who refused to submit his taper to the control of any one, who spoke, moreover, Italian with great volubility, and consequently kept up an incessant flow of *sotto voce* imprecations on the boys around him, you may judge how far it was possible to suit one's feelings, or even one's face to the solemnity of the occasion.

'When at last we reached the church, matters were rather worse inside than they had been out. The crowd or rabble was even greater. There was no attempt at police, either civil or religious. The priests and their assistants looked like men of the very lowest stamp, as though kept for the express purpose of doing the night work of their order. Their persons were filthy in the extreme; their countenances debased almost to brutishness; and their mechanical mode of jabbering through the service as fast as they could go, entirely regardless of the dirty and disgraceful scene around, and as though perfectly hardened and used to it, most painful to witness. There was only one thing about which the officials seemed really anxious, and that was to save wax, which I presume is dear. I observed that the instant we entered the church with our torches, the attendants began to extinguish the numberless candles which had been lighted (and doubtless paid for) at the altar, but which were not allowed to burn during the service, as I suppose they ought to have done. At the close of it, our own tapers were carefully extinguished, and we left the boys bargaining about the wax they had collected.

The whole proceeding was simply odious and

revolting, combining the painful and the ludicrous to a degree perhaps seldom equalled. What must have been the feelings of any one connected with the dead, and to whom the object, or rather subject, of such a celebration was near and dear, I am at a loss to imagine. Not for any consideration would one have seen the remains of kindred of one's own submitted to such treatment, or so bid them a last adieu. And this, I thought, as I forced my way out of the church through the rabble,—and this is Christian burial in a Christian land! The rites of Rome ought indeed to be efficacious, for in Florence, at least, some of them have no other title to our respect.

I have described simply what I saw, with the impression produced by it on my own feelings.

LETTER V.

The Question of Religious Reformation *continued*—The little outward Interest manifested in it by the Upper Classes and the Clergy in general—The Aversion of the former to Sectarian Movements—Tendency to Rationalism among Young Italians—Protestant Propagandism—Its Activity and outward Development—Of what Elements composed—Italian Free Churches—Their Earnestness and Extravagances—Bible Influence among them—Their Services—Total Absence of Ritualism—Anglican Congregationalists.

Florence, October 21st, 1865.

PURSUING the subject of which I spoke last week, I would say further that when I then intimated how small, as it appears to me, are as yet the proportions of the movement towards religious reformation in Italy, and how little has been done to enable us to form any judgment as to the probable results, I was far from intending to convey the impression that all that has been attempted of late years in that direction had failed.

As far, indeed, as the upper classes or the clergy themselves are concerned, I must confess

that I have hitherto sought in vain for the evidence of any definite *action* taken, either by the one or the other, in the direction indicated, or for signs of the influence upon them of any new enlightenment, or of any attempt made by them to turn the nation to such. Among the higher ranks of society, religion, in a spiritual sense, appears to be neither a subject of discussion, nor even of interest; and if it be spoken of at all, it is solely with a view to its political aspect, and its bearing upon the present position of the country with regard to Rome.

An Italian nobleman of great distinction, as well as of great simplicity and religious earnestness of character, assured me, as a statistical fact, that he did not know of another man of his order in Florence besides himself, who professed to be actively and openly concerned about the interests of religion. Such men hold to the Roman communion through tradition and family connexion, but there their profession of faith begins and ends. They follow the observances of the Church with decent indifference, but do not consider an active interference in religion any part of their concern. Above all, they are deeply impressed with the social conviction that to swerve in any way from the faith of their ancestors would be to

lose caste, to derogate from their nobility; that heresy is a low and vulgar thing, and that any tendency towards "Protestantism," as they only understand the term, must immediately bring them into contact with low and vulgar people.

I do not believe that there is a sentiment more advantageous to Rome, among the upper classes in Italy, than the above. They have the same repulsion to being mixed up with a purely sectarian movement, that a gentlemanly High Churchman in England might be supposed to feel, apart from other and higher considerations, at being invited to frequent a conventicle. Until something is put before them to replace the hereditary superstition, which shall be free from this taint, the Italian upper classes will hold fast by the old tradition, and there will be little chance of reformation coming from above. I can discover few or no symptoms of the rise of any such new principles among themselves. No publications or controversies on the subject proceed from them, no associations are formed among them; such questions are not only not studied, but not even talked about or hardly permitted to be raised in what is called good society. Indifference, and to hold on by what they are accustomed to, seem to be the only rule. And it must be remembered that

the above view (which I need hardly say is not merely my own, nor based on my own imperfect experience and means of observation) represents only the more favourable and more moral aspect of upper-class society in Italy, and refers chiefly to the sentiments and conduct of the maturer members of it. When we come to inquire into the rising generation, we are assured that, in them, it is no longer only mere indifference to which outward observances serve as a cloak, but simple and absolute disbelief and infidelity. Nay, the cloak is now very frequently not even assumed at all. For, if heresy and Protestantism are vulgar things, free-thinking and philosophy (as in the times of Leo X.) are not; and are, moreover, unfortunately thought by young upper-class Italy to be in accordance with, if not the necessary complement to, unity, liberty, the constitution, Rome and Venice, and all the other great vital and patriotic questions of the day.

This account of things is very sad, if it be not exaggerated, as I would fain hope it may be. But too many examples have been brought before me of such principles developing themselves by that very action, publicity, and association which I have above complained of as being wanting elsewhere, to allow me to doubt that the evil is exten-

sive and spreading. To what long-standing abuses of spiritual influence the origin of this evil is mainly to be attributed, I shall not now stop to inquire.

But if religious movement in a right direction be insignificant, or almost invisible, from above, the same cannot quite be asserted as to what is going on below, in Italy. There, among the masses, a spirit, such as it is, is certainly at work, both indigenous and foreign, and its operation is one which can be palpably handled and appreciated. The moment we come to this part of the inquiry there is something tangible to go upon, and the whole usual machinery of such manifestations starts at once into view. Here we have schools to teach children, chapels in which to preach to grown-up people, numberless controversial publications addressing themselves directly to the questions at issue, depôts and shops at which they are sold below their cost price, distribution of the Scriptures on a large scale, subscriptions, associations—in a word, Propaganda, with all its ardent features and reality.

I have followed this movement with considerable pains and labour from the time I crossed the frontier, and it is not without regret that I feel compelled to avow, that I have, as yet, met with scarcely any other serious attempt making

to evangelize Italy afresh. The books, pamphlets, publications, proceedings, and action of the various bodies connected with this religious "movement from below" meet one very frequently; but they are the only outward manifestation of the kind which ever, I think, come directly and visibly across the traveller's notice, and invite further investigation. There may be other influences at work, but they must be of a very intangible kind, extremely difficult to seize or appreciate, and to be sought and found probably only in the privacy of personal intercourse and confidence; at least, the few and rare instances I have hitherto met with, especially among the more enlightened of the clergy, have been of that kind, and under those circumstances. But other open action there seems to be scarcely any, beyond that which we are now considering. Having remained longer in Florence than any where else, I have seen more of it here, and am now considerably impressed with its extent and earnestness, though far from sanguine either as to its material success or good results.

The basis of the movement is twofold—partly indigenous, partly foreign. The home element is derived, of course, chiefly from the Waldenses, now emancipated and left free to penetrate the

country, Bible in hand, as Italian citizens. This they have not failed to do, and with an impetuosity and sturdy vigour, which have incurred already the risk of arousing that provincial jealousy, so deeply implanted in Italian breasts. The Waldenses, said a leading Italian Protestant of this city to me, insist upon making us Christians and Churchmen precisely after their own model, and would only induce us to change one yoke for another; whereas our determination is to be "free." The same accusation was brought by the same speaker against Presbyterians, Wesleyans, Independents, and all the other communions who make up the foreign element in the movement I am describing. They all, it was said, instead of merely helping and aiding us, wish us to become precisely what they are themselves. The only exception made was in favour of the Anglicans. They, I was told, give us their advice, and sometimes even their money, without seeking to make us their proselytes, or place us under their rule; but they are the only friends who act so liberally by us.

It must be added, however, that the meaning which the above parties attach to their idea of religious "freedom" is sufficiently expansive. Professing to be weary of these attempts to

coerce them, they have thrown off every species of Church organization, or prescribed form or doctrine whatsoever. They admit of no priesthood, though professing to go upon the Bible, and nothing but the Bible. They object even to the use of the Lord's Prayer. Avowedly, they say, because it is not a Christian prayer. But, as though this were not going far enough, I understand from private sources that their real disinclination to make use of the language put into their lips by our Lord is founded upon the petition contained in it for "forgiveness of sins." A true Christian, they say, cannot sin, though he may do wrong in the flesh! Yet these men number among them individuals whose piety cannot be doubted, and whose capacity, in other respects, is far above what the utter extravagance of some of their religious views would lead one to expect. They meet together for prayer in Florence, not far from where I am writing, in considerable numbers; some two or three of them are men of rank and station, whom it is really affecting to see kneeling beside the very poorest of their countrymen, listening to outpourings whose chief merit consists too often only in their evident and unmistakeable sincerity.

I attended one of these congregations, of which

there are two in Florence, on two occasions, once in the morning and once in the evening; and both times found a considerable number of persons present, though at the morning service, I was assured, the numbers were much less than usual, "on account of the elections." These were going on at the time, on a Sunday, as is generally the case on the Continent; and the elders and leaders of these separatists, as well as the flock itself, identify their cause too closely with that of the existence of a free constitution and government, to admit of their absenting themselves, for any reason, from the performance of their electoral duties.

The *locale* where the congregation assembles twice on the Sunday is a vaulted apartment of cruciform shape, on the ground-floor of a large building in the Corso Vittor' Emmanuele, in the new part of the town. It is, I believe, the result of private munificence, having been appropriated and adapted to its present uses by a leading and wealthy member of these Italian Free Churches. Its shape and vaulted formation impart to it more of an ecclesiastical character than we usually meet with in such places, but were, I imagine, in the minds of the donor and designer, intended rather to recall the idea of the Cata-

combs and their primitive Christian assemblies. Inside, there was nothing visible but ranges of chairs or benches along the nave, in each arm of the transept, and in the apse, without any distinction of seats or other forms for the celebration of Divine Service. Exactly in the centre of the crossing, however, was placed a very small and mean four-legged table, without any cloth upon it, and on which stood a round plate with a loaf of bread, and by the side of them a decanter of wine and a tumbler. As I sat watching, with much interest, the members of the congregation enter, I was chiefly struck by two things: first, the appearance there of several men (the men, indeed, so contrary to what is the case in Roman Catholic places of worship generally, were quite as numerous as the women) of the upper class, one, indeed, whom I knew personally, of superior rank; and, secondly, by the presence of so considerable a number of working mechanics. These latter were particular objects of attention to me; indeed, it was impossible to contemplate their look and bearing without respect, or almost emotion. Most of them had the appearance of men who really work hard; steady, honest-looking, intelligent *ouvriers*. All, without exception, had evidently got themselves up as well as they could

to go to Church. Their garments were often patched and poor enough, but they were invariably clean and tidy, and the wearers had evidently scrubbed and washed scrupulously their hard, horny hands.

The first thing that each did when he took his seat was to seize a Testament which lay provided, and read it, often, I could see, with some difficulty, but with an avidity I never saw equalled. They devoured the contents literally like thirsty souls, with the eagerness of men drinking in living waters after a long drought. There could be no mistake as to the appetite, nor as to the delight afforded by its gratification.

It was indescribably pleasant to watch the faces of these men as they read. They had evidently got hold of something which was new and fresh to them, and as attractive as it was novel. This, their countenances seemed to say, is what we so long wanted, so long gasped for, and which goes home at once to the heart and the understanding. I do not in the slightest degree exaggerate this picture; indeed, I cannot draw it nearly up to the mark. I never had the power and the comfort of the Bible more strongly brought home to my own mind, than in observing the effect of it upon the whole demeanour of these poor men.

Very likely feelings of spiritual pride might be blended with their satisfaction. It is the bane of this sect, as of so many others. They think themselves, I understand, the salt of the earth, and destined to be the regenerators of Christendom; looking upon Papists, of course, as men in outer darkness, and upon us poor Anglicans as only a degree better. At least, their leaders are accused of such sentiments, and I have reason to believe not altogether unjustly. They fraternize openly with no other denomination of Christians, and refuse especially to accept of any foreign title or designation. You cannot offend them more than by speaking of them as Plymouth Brethren, though I understand their doctrines and organization, such as it is, correspond most nearly to that community. They are the Pre-Raphaelites of Christianity; and what they love to be regarded as is as men having gone back to the very fountain-head of all things, and revivifying Christianity from its most primitive sources.

I remarked there a lady of the better class with her two daughters, girls of thirteen or fourteen, evidently Roman Catholics, who had been brought by a friend, aided, doubtless, by their own curiosity to see what *I Protestanti* were like among themselves. The effect produced upon them appeared

to be very much what might be expected to be produced upon ordinary Romanists, by the contrast between what they saw and the splendours of the Santissima Annunziata, hard by. They evidently looked upon the whole affair with the greatest contempt. The lady, indeed, endeavoured to preserve some external appearance of decorum, but the young people giggled almost audibly, especially during a most painful part of the service which I am about to describe, although I can hardly bring myself to do so.

The service, if it can indeed be so called, commenced by singing a hymn out of a very good little hymn-book printed at Florence, and entitled "*Inni e Canzoni ad uso dei Christiani Evangelici d'Italia.*" Many of these hymns struck me as being remarkable compositions. One of their great merits, no doubt, was that of being so purely and thoroughly Italian in feeling. For us, the character and the rhythm would have been perhaps too operatic; for one was instinctively reminded on opening the book, or by the measure when hearing them sung, of some of the sublimer compositions of the Italian stage, such as, for instance, the "*Dal tuo stellato soglio*" of the "*Mosè in Egytto.*" They were full, in fact, of that "fire" of devotion which seems essential

to all true religious feeling in the Italian breast, that *fuoco* of which they continually speak, and without which nothing is great in their eyes, either in religion or any thing else.

There was something which sounded to me quite sublime, in the first burst of the full Italian voice, as the congregation sang, with a *con amore* that was as unmistakeable as it was impressive and infectious, the opening lines:—

"Cantiam cantiamo a Dio
S' apra alla gioia il cor."

Almost the entire hymn-book reads like a succession of grand triumphal odes on the Redemption, which forms almost its only topic. One would say it was the composition of men who had long lost sight of the great principle of Christianity, or from whom it had been long hidden, and who, when it had at last burst upon them, had thrown themselves into the feelings it is calculated to inspire with all the freshness of first emotions:—

"Gioite, o popoli; fuor dell' avello
Sorge il pacifico, l'ucciso Agnello.
Lo scettro ferreo spezzò di morte,
Del Cielo ai miseri apre le porte;
Dopo le tenebre risplende il dì."

I have given the above verse, because it so

well expresses the character of this primitive and almost enthusiastic worship, in which the word "gioia" recurs perpetually. The following, which I also venture to quote, seems to embody almost the whole extent of doctrinal teaching which their creed admits:—

"Giojosi, o fratelli,
Sediamo alla mensa,
In cui, sotto un velo,
La fede dispensa
Le arcane, le sante
Dovizie d'amor.

"Il pane ed il vino
I simboli sono
Di grazia perenne,
Di pace e perdono,
Del corpo e del sangue
Del nostro Signor.

"Nel pane che nutre,
E imparte vigore,
Gesù ci rammenta
Che soffre, che muore,
Per darci una vita
Che sera non ha.

"Nel vin che sui mali
Diffonde l'obblio,
L' emblema scorgiamo,
Del Sangue di Dio,
Che i falli cancella
E pace ci dà.

"Il caro compiamo
Precetto divino;
Gustiamo, o fratelli,
Nel pane e nel vino
Le arcane, le pure
Dolcezze di amor.

"Si celebri in questo
Santissimo rito
Del nostro riscatto
Il prezzo infinito,
Infin che dai cieli
Non torni il Signor."

The singing of the above was introductory, of course, to the celebration of Holy Communion, or for what stands for such among them. Previously there had been portions of Scripture read by a member of the congregation, and then intervals of silence, during which it was evident that some one was waited for, or the arrival of some one expected.

When I inquired the meaning of this, and asked who was waited for, or who could be waited for, inasmuch as I understood that there was no clergy, or recognized order of priesthood among them, I was told that "the minister" had not come.

"But," I remarked, "I thought you had no minister?"

"Oh! but we call him so," was the reply; a

naïve confession of the simple practical necessity of that very ordination which these poor people, in their weariness of mere conventionality and traditional form, and their yearning after fountains of primitive faith, are so intent upon denying or repudiating.

In the absence of this unacknowledged "minister," one or two members rose and prayed, earnestly, indeed, but in a sadly confused and wandering vein; and then followed that part of the service to which I have above alluded.

It was a singular and almost sad sight to look upon; but one capable of suggesting many serious considerations, and imparting useful lessons to us in more than one point of view. One of the congregation, it seemed scarcely to matter who, got up from his seat, and going to the little table, took up the plate and loaf, from which he broke off a bit of bread and ate it—literally helped himself—and then passed on the plate to another, who did the same. The same member, or some one else, I forget which, then poured out a tumbler of wine from the decanter, drank a little, and gave the glass to the next person. And so both the loaf and the glass went round the congregation, which remained sitting.

Now, here was an example of the rejection

of all form carried to its utmost excess, a complete and absolute exclusion of the ritualistic element. There were no appointed officiators, no liturgy, no prayers, no any thing; nothing, in short, but the elements and the communicants. The attempt was doubtless intended to be an imitation of the breaking of bread from house to house, after what was taken for granted to be the practice of primitive, or even apostolic times.

And what was the result of this entire abolition of ceremony, to say nothing of more essential requisites, either upon the congregation, so far as I could judge from its behaviour, or upon lookers-on like myself? Was it to heighten the effect of the rite by this substitution of what was intended to be a sublime simplicity, in place of a decent ceremonial? Quite the reverse; on the contrary, the rite which was imitated was painfully degraded by such imitations, and the impression produced fell short entirely of what was aimed at. The congregation, with perhaps a single exception or so, was wholly unequal to the task imposed on it, of dispensing with all external aid and investing the ceremony with a dignity only of its own, or of their own appreciation of it. The effort was evidently beyond their powers, and the consequence inevitably was,

that the celebration of the holiest rite of Christianity degenerated into something painfully below its real character and meaning.

As to the Roman Catholics present, of whom I have above spoken, their conduct, though utterly indefensible, might have proved a good lesson to those who, while professing to teach a better way, were in reality only rushing into an opposite extreme. There were moments when they might have seen their own imitation of all that is most sacred, solemn, mysterious, and suggestive in the religion they profess, made a subject for tittering and ridicule by those whom they invite to be instructed and enlightened, simply because they deprive its celebration of what may not be the less necessary because it is not essential.

As to myself, I will only say that never did I more highly appreciate the "decent ceremonial" of the Church of England, than when I retired from these modern catacombs of the Corso Vittor' Emmanuele. I had left only a few days previously the Church of the Santissima Annunziata, wearied and exhausted, I had well-nigh written disgusted also, with the cumbrousness of a ceremonial (to say nothing of the object of it), which long residence in Roman Catholic countries (*experto crede*) robs of all or nearly all its powers

of fascination, by depriving it of its first novelty and attractiveness. A sort of painful pity, on the contrary, was the uppermost feeling in my mind, when I quitted the so-called primitive congregation of the Italian Evangelical Church. There was so much eager, earnest, joyful piety about these people, that one could not but regret extremely their wandering so far astray, in their untaught zeal and energy. They presented the most striking example I ever came across of sheep that had lost their shepherd. They literally were wandering in a wilderness, in search of riches long withheld from them.

Their case is, doubtless, that of a strong revulsion, or rather repulsion against erroneous teaching and exaggerated formalities. By these they have been driven into the opposite extreme[1],

[1] The evil consequences of such teaching and exaggeration are by no means, it would seem, confined to Italy, or to such revulsions as the above. In France they exhibit themselves under still worse forms of reaction:—"More than ever I am convinced that this anti-religious movement, this flood of atheism which displays itself, for some years past, in our country, menacing the foundations of all morality and all society, is, at bottom, nothing but a reaction, immoderate, I allow—unjust, I proclaim it as loudly as any one—but still a reaction, fatally brought about by the doctrines, theories, and practices of every kind, by which, for some time past, it has been attempted to sustain the temporal power of the

and in this lies at once their excuse, and the hope, perhaps, of their progress towards a better state of things. That they are completely in earnest, there cannot be a doubt. The most authentic histories have been told me of numbers of individuals among them, of the most blameless lives and characters, who have literally sacrificed every thing they had in the world, friends, credit, custom, prospects, every thing, in short, to follow the new path they had marked out for themselves.

The impulse has one advantage, in being apparently more purely and intrinsically Italian, perhaps, than any other part of the religious movement in Italy whatsoever. At least, its followers seem to abjure all foreign influence, and even reject as such the interference or instruction of the Waldenses themselves. Their besetting sin is, indeed, as has been said, spiritual pride, self-conceit, and a conviction that they are wiser and more enlightened than the rest of the world. But, though puffed up with these opinions, they are not fanatical. Their hymns breathe invariably the expression of love, joy, peace, hope, rather than the fierceness of sectarian zeal. They invite, but seem to have no

Papacy."—Speech of President Bonjean in the French Senate, Monday, February 12, 1866.

idea of compelling unity or conformity with themselves. There is, I think, great hope that these people will either find their way back of themselves to better things, when the first wild energy of resistance to the past is over, or, becoming conscious of having gone astray, open their ears to sounder teaching, if such could be judiciously presented to them.

Fortunately, there is growing up alongside of this movement another of a very different class, which I may as well speak of here, though it would fall in more appropriately with a subsequent part of these letters. I wish, however, to place it in immediate juxtaposition with the subject above mentioned and the picture drawn of it.

When I was at Genoa I was anxious to investigate, as far as I could, the matter of those reforming congregations who have adopted a very different mode of proceeding from that of the Evangelical Italians. I mean those Italian Catholic congregations, who, finding themselves either unable any longer conscientiously to frequent the worship of the Romish Church, or being absolutely precluded from its sacraments, have voluntarily, and under clergymen placed in the same difficult predicament with themselves, adopted the An-

glican forms, or, perhaps I should rather say, adapted our forms to Italian usages.

Unfortunately, the gentleman who was most able to direct and assist me in this inquiry was absent from Genoa, and I was, therefore, thrown chiefly on my own resources. I had procured, however, the address of one of the places of meeting of these congregations, and thither I proceeded; for I have generally found that the external physiognomy and bearing of these assemblies, when studied a little closely for himself by an independent observer, often initiates one better and more practically into their true character and meaning than more formal inquiries.

It was Friday evening, and having found, with some difficulty, the narrow street and the house which had been indicated to me, I was groping my way somewhat doubtfully up a dark staircase, when the sound of a voice speaking very earnestly met my ear, and presently I came to a door, before which hung a curtain.

On drawing it aside and entering, I found a room fitted up with benches, and occupied by some forty or fifty men and women and children. The speaker, or preacher, stood in a sort of pulpit, placed in one corner. But the first thing that caught my eye on the wall, just opposite the

door, was an arrangement, in gothic form, of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, exactly as seen in our Church, and requiring only a Communion Table in front of it to be complete. Above the whole, fixed to the wall, was a large wooden cross. On the book-board of the benches were placed what I found, on opening them, to be Italian versions of our own Prayer Book, with Diodati's Testament (a translation of the Scriptures, of which I have only recently learnt to appreciate the remarkable excellence), and a book of hymns. The latter were of much the same character, and sung in the same fervid style, as those I have mentioned as having heard in a very different place. I shall not readily forget the sort of vehement earnestness with which the burden, or *refrain*, of one of the hymns, "*Gesù, vieni a noi*," was sung by the entire congregation on this occasion.

It is impossible to avoid again remarking the eagerness with which these reforming Italian congregations, of all denominations, seize upon the vital primitive doctrines of Christianity. They do not seem to receive them, as we do, too much perhaps, as a matter of course, as something long taken for granted, and in safe possession; but more like a new-found thing—like something they have

suddenly discovered for themselves, or which has been long kept from them, and in the recovery, and knowledge, and enjoyment of which there is a freshness and charm to which they can scarcely sufficiently give expression. Their delight in the Scriptures is unmistakeable, and I observed that, whenever the preacher cited a text, there was scarcely any one of the congregation who did not immediately busy himself to turn it up in his own Bible.

The sermon, of which I only heard the fag end, turned upon the same fundamental points, the redemption by One Mediator being, above all, strenuously set forth. When the sermon was over, the entire congregation knelt reverently down, and it was not without considerable emotion that I heard, for the first time from an Italian pulpit, the familiar sound of our own prayer: "Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that the words which we have this day heard with our outward ears," &c., followed by the benediction, pronounced after the same well-known formula.

The officiating priest, as many of your readers will doubtless be prepared to hear, was the Rev. Mr. Corrado, well known, I believe, to many of our own clergy, and who, as he told me himself, has received direct encouragement from An-

glican Episcopal authority to go on and prosper in the work he is doing.

Here again, from all I could learn, the movement is purely voluntary, and purely Italian. We have had nothing to do with setting it a-going. Its origin is to be found in the force of circumstances alone. Mr. Corrado had been long in England, long, I believe, a communicant of our Church there. He knew perfectly and thoroughly what we were, and seems to have thought that what he knew us to be, or something like it, large bodies of his countrymen would wish to become, if they could be taught or knew how. Upon him, and those with him and like him, rests entirely the responsibility of the initiative they have taken. They find our books, read them, and like them, and desire to think with us, and be of us, as Catholic Christians.

Mr. Corrado was good enough to show me his book of expenditure and receipts, kept apparently with the most punctilious regularity. Every sixpence which passes through his hands is here entered, with the use made of it. He had told his congregation, that if they wished to show that they were in earnest, they must begin by helping themselves, and making sacrifices for that pur-

pose. They are all, or very nearly all, poor people. Nevertheless, they cheerfully contribute from one to two francs per month, towards the expenses of public worship. These entries were all regularly made for the month of November; and, what especially struck me, was the fact, that for the following month of December nearly all the two-franc payments were *already made in advance*, showing that such members of the congregation as were a little better off than the rest were anxious to do their best towards the general good.

It was impossible not to feel touched by such a circumstance as the above, among a class so poor as the Italian artisans usually are: Means had thus been obtained to erect the tablets above spoken of; and "soon," said Mr. Corrado, "we hope to place our altar in front of them." I was interested to learn, that the wealthy Italian family to whom the house belonged where these services were held, having heard of them, had been led by curiosity to attend. They had been much struck, Mr. Corrado told me, by what they *saw*, as well as by what they heard. The *Credo*, the Commandments, the Cross, the general ecclesiastical look and arrangements of the place and service, the frequent repetitions of the *Glorias*, all

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produced on them a visible effect. When leaving the church, he observed that they instinctively crossed themselves, in the manner practised by Roman Catholics, as though under a devout impression of the sanctity of the place, and of the solemnity of the meaning of what they had just seen and heard.

Now, mark the difference of the effect produced on *these* Roman Catholics of Genoa, in a place where the forms of Anglican worship were even thus poorly represented, and that produced on *those* other Roman Catholics of Florence, whose bearing I have above described among the Italian "Protestants." Is it possible not to wish, and to hope, and to strive, that these two movements, both so purely Italian and spontaneous, might be amalgamated; that the Florentine congregations might be brought *up* to that better standard, below which they have fallen from ignorance and revulsion from opposite excesses, rather than from any serious convictions or resolutions against it, of which they are almost certain soon to begin to feel the want, and to which gentleness, and sympathy, and judicious teaching, and exhortation might so probably lead them? "Had you but a better *locale*," said Mr. Corrado's Roman Catholic auditors to him on leaving, "we

would come often; we like your services much." Such a remark goes far, I think, to confirm what I said in a previous letter, viz., that if you remove from such movements as the above, in Italy, the stain of heresy and mere Protestantizing, you take away the great objections felt to joining them by intelligent and inquiring upper-class Italian society.

Mr. Corrado requires, at this moment, only funds, in order to obtain the consent of the same proprietor to pulling down a party-wall of the house where his services are held, and converting, at the same time that he erects his altar, his too small and insignificant *locale* into a respectable and commodious chapel, provided with a suitable vestry, or sacristy.

To return, however, to the more immediate subject from which I have diverged in order to draw the above contrast, it would still appear that the fountain-head of the movement in opposition to Romanism is to be found in the Waldenses, in the aid derived by them from foreign Protestants, and above all, perhaps, in him, who, if not exactly their official head, is certainly their spiritual leader in this country, De Sanctis.

This very remarkable man seems to me to be

doing far more in his own sphere than Passaglia, and to be the living and working representative of Italian religious reform, in the only shape in which it is as yet really in action. He is at the head of a theological school, or seminary, consisting of some twenty young men, whom he can hardly fail to imbue with a portion of his own indomitable fire and energy, and with whom he resides in a large building, still called by courtesy a Palazzo, once the property of the Archbishop of Florence, and purchased by foreign and, of course, chiefly English [2] funds, for the foundation of this college. In a large and commodious chapel belonging to the same, De Sanctis preaches every Sunday to an audience far more numerous than I expected to find in Tuscany, and far more earnest and attentive than any similar congregations I saw either in Turin, Milan, or elsewhere. To be sure, the preacher was a man of very different vein and calibre, possessing a remarkable power of rousing and fixing the sympathies and attention of a congregation such as he addressed, composed almost entirely of the humbler classes.

And yet De Sanctis is any thing but a man of imposing appearance, or answering to our idea

[2] This somewhat incorrect expression and statement will be found further explained and modified below.

of a divinity teacher. He wears no gown or ecclesiastical vestment of any kind, dresses absolutely like a layman, even to wearing a spotted neck-tie, turn-down collar, and breast-pin; and when he entered the church at a side door, laid down his brown straw hat and walking-stick upon the communion table, in front of the pulpit, previous to ascending the latter[3]. This was carrying *sans façon* pretty nearly as far as it could go in such matters. But his teaching has been above his appearance, when I have heard him, and his power over his hearers is evidently very great. His publications are very numerous, and widely disseminated. You meet with them every where; and though far less bulky, their effect must be infinitely greater than that produced by Passaglia's heavy productions, which few seem to read except those who do not need them, or his newspapers, which seem to be read by no one. Italy is quite weary of and indifferent to mere scholastic theology, and must be roused by a trumpet of quite a different sound, if she is to be roused at all.

[3] The account here given of De Sanctis's appearance and manner led to the application to him of what seemed to me a very harsh epithet in the pages of the "Guardian," against which I thought it only right to protest, so far as I was myself implicated. I am happy to say that the epithet has since been courteously withdrawn.

The popularity and sale of some of De Sanctis's publications are immense. The sixteenth edition of *La Confessione* has just appeared. The *Ritratto di Maria*, or portrait of the Blessed Virgin, drawn from the Gospels, promises to be immensely popular. The *Il Purgatorio* is at the second edition, and *La Messa* and *Il Papa* equally in favour as specimens of popular controversy. The most widely spread of all his publications, however, is his almanack, called *L'Amico di Casa*, price twopence, almost universally used among the people, both Catholic and Protestant, in spite of the opposition of the priests, and a most damaging exposure of the legends indulged in by Romish publishers in similar works. There can be no doubt that these writings, now that they can no longer be checked or controlled by physical and material opposition, will end by producing a wide effect upon the population.

The movement, such as it exhibits itself to me at present, seems to spring evidently and mainly from below. It is asserted, on good authority, that De Sanctis, after he had fled from Rome and taken refuge, I believe, at Malta, was offered a bishopric if he would return to his allegiance; nor can we wonder at the authority he had thrown off being desirous, at almost any cost, to stop the

mouth of so formidable and well-initiated an opponent.

The elections take place to-morrow, Sunday, that being the only day on which it is supposed the Italian people can find time to attend to their political interests. The official notification of the polling-places was yesterday posted throughout the four electoral divisions of the city, and there is now a considerable increase of bustle and excitement visible, as the decisive moment approaches, manifested by a new flood of political pamphlets, letters, and addresses to the constituency.

There is something altogether novel in the sight of such doings, in a place formerly so tranquil and entirely devoid of all political aspect as Florence. The people seem to feel much interest in what is going on, and the crowd is always great around the news-shops in such thoroughfares as the Via de' Calzaioli, where political pamphlets are sold, and caricatures exposed, and, above all, in the Piazza della Signoria (formerly del Grand Duca), the forum and grand gossiping rendezvous of the Florentines. The taste for caricatures especially seems to be universal, and these never fail to attract a crowd, whether good, bad, or indifferent. Popes and cardinals seem to offer the

chief objects for Italian wit at Florence, as well as Turin. Two of the latest of these represent, the one, the famous Perseus of Benvenuto Cellini, in the Loggia, who, transformed into the genius of Italy, holds up the dissevered head of poor Pio Nono, instead of that of Medusa, having at the same time cut through hosts of brigands and the whole ex-Neapolitan Court, with his trenchant sword. The other displays the same Sovereign Pontiff endeavouring to poise himself with one foot upon two bayonets, evidently slipping from beneath him, and grasping vainly at the clouds for support, while the weight of a multitude of little ferocious brigands, armed to the teeth with stilettoes, and clinging to his pontifical skirts, gradually pulls him down. Brigandism and the Papal system seem now, indeed, to be thoroughly rooted in the Italian mind as synonymous ideas.

LETTER VI.

Activity of other English Religious Communions in Italy, as compared with the Church of England—Difficulties in the way of the Action of the latter—Want of proper Elements only apparent—Proof of the Existence of a Reforming Catholic Party—Precariousness of its Position—Little Help hitherto afforded it—Arguments for coming more effectually to its Assistance—Real Nature of the Contest it is maintaining—Result of Political Elections.

Florence, Nov. 4th, 1865.

In the remarks which I addressed to you a fortnight ago on the subject of these letters, I attributed, as you would not fail to perceive, a decided preponderance, both with respect to action and the success attending it, to bodies not in communion with the Church of England. Nor could I well escape from such a conclusion, either with those facts before me which I then referred to, and which most readily arrest the attention of a temporary observer, or with justice to the parties who were making the sacrifices and exertions necessary to produce the result achieved.

The large liberality of the Church of Scotland, in this respect, cannot be overlooked; especially as manifested towards the Waldenses, in the opening for them of the theological college and church of the Via de' Seragli, in this city; founded, as I ought to have said when noticing it, by British, rather than English aid. The establishment, by the same agency, of the first native Italian press for the printing of Diodati's version of the New Testament, is another great fact; thereby securing the important practical advantage of placing the Scriptures in the hands of Italians in a purely Italian form, and one which does not bear upon it the mark of a foreign importation.

The support given to this last-mentioned expensive and hazardous undertaking by the Protestant Bible Society, and without which it could scarcely, perhaps, have proved successful, is another instance of the same kind. That society is just now taking the third edition of ten thousand Testaments off the printer's hands, at a remunerative price, while it disposes of them itself at a price (fivepence apiece) which entails a loss, in shops, of which, again, it pays the rent and provides the agents. All this substantial aid, to say nothing of personal exertion—such, for instance, as that given to the same cause with so much

discretion and liberality by the Rev. J. R. M'Dougall, of the Free Kirk of Scotland—all this action is what no inquirer into the prospects of religious reformation in Italy can overlook, or fail on the whole to approve of, whatever reservations he may be disposed to make with regard to some portions of it.

But while I still continue to think that I fell neither into exaggeration nor mistake in representing the above movement as the most active and ardent, as it is certainly the most apparent of its kind in Italy;—for what have we of the Church of England done, or as yet even allowed that it was permissible for us to do, in comparison with it? — although this may be so, yet I am only too glad to hope that I may have been wrong in other impressions, and have expressed myself too summarily with respect to them. I was inclined at first to believe, not only that such action as that above alluded to was by far the most prominent, as, in fact, it is, but, moreover, that the very elements were in a great degree wanting to which other, and, as we conceive, higher religious influences might address themselves. Other English religious communions seemed to have found a vein in the country which they could work, in a way in accordance

with their own principles. But the Church of England seemed to have done and to be doing little; partly, indeed, perhaps from doubts as to her right course of action, but partly, also, because there was a less direct call for her intervention. The opinion was founded upon the consideration that the upper classes in Italy, and even the middle classes and *bourgeois*, were so shut up and guarded either by social prejudices and superstition, or by sheer indifference, or by downright incredulity, as to make it hopeless that they would even listen to such suggestions on the subject of religion as we could alone offer them, much less that they would themselves invite or summon our aid in the way in which so many among us would, perhaps, deem it necessary they should, in order to legitimatize our interference. Of a whole nation, indeed, of which Passaglia expressed his doubt to be "not so much whether they were good Catholics, as whether they retained any earnest Christian faith at all," it seemed vain to expect that they would either move in favour of religious reformation themselves, or be moved otherwise than by appeals more direct and subversive than any we might be willing to address to them.

Another reason for the unhopeful opinion I

was led to entertain, was the difficulty of getting privately at the sentiments of any considerable body of the clergy, or of estimating accurately the representations respecting them which are made public. The only secure mode of obtaining such information seemed, as I before remarked, to lie in habits of personal and confidential intercourse, to be formed only by long residence in the country, but unattainable by the temporary sojourner. To judge from what was visible on the surface, there seemed little room for confidence in the effect of Church of England action on such elements, and elsewhere, the ground appeared already occupied by parties who were at once more active and less scrupulous than ourselves.

The above view was certainly not encouraging; but though in the main perhaps correct, I have since been led to hope that it is not wholly so. Sources of information recently opened to me, with much kindness, by those who have laboured long and sedulously in the cause, have revealed to me a state of religious feeling which has, as yet, committed itself to few overt acts, but which requires only sympathy and encouragement to give it at once a larger development, and substantial aid and assistance to impart to it a permanent and imposing shape. That is

to say, in spite of the general indifference, impiety, and superstition of those who call themselves Catholics, there is evidence of the existence, in Italy, of a considerable class, both among the laity and the clergy, who are desirous to meet us half-way; and, what is of more importance, to declare their willingness to do so, if sure of our support in making a declaration of which the consequences to themselves have been only too strikingly illustrated by recent examples.

At present, however, with the exception of a press of very modest pretensions and limited publicity, there is little outward demonstration of this feeling. It is something very different in kind, as well as in principles and object, from the more bustling and vigorous movement which I formerly described; and is at once more "difficult to seize and to appreciate," as I remarked it must be, if it existed at all, before I was aware of it, and less easy to convey a correct idea of to others, than if it translated itself openly by a multitude of material facts. Perhaps I may be able to convey the best impression of it to English Churchmen, by jotting down the way in which it broke upon myself, in the course of inquiries, readings, and conversations with various persons, at different times, upon the subject.

I began sometimes, in such conversations, at the very fountain-head, and with an evident disposition to doubt of the very reality of what I was inquiring after, or, at least, of its being any thing of a serious and appreciable character. Does there really exist, I often asked, in this country amongst the clergy, and to a certain extent amongst the laity also, a desire for religious reformation, for a sounder form of Catholic doctrine to be taught them, and for a new organization of Church government, at once more Christian and more national? Yes, such a desire certainly does exist, was the reply. But, as regarded the vast majority of those who entertained it, it had as yet assumed no definite form, and had no definite object or action in view. It amounted to little more than a deep-rooted sentiment, a feeling—*immaginazione* was, I think, the expression sometimes used. Were there no means, then, of appealing to this feeling, to this yearning, seemingly, after something better, to develope it and draw it out? They knew of none, I was told, with an Italian gesture that was not meant to be encouraging in its signification—except the press—the religious press, that is—*la stampa*. But mere writing and publishing, I observed, seemed to begin and end in controversy, and

to produce nothing of a tangible or practical character, in aid of the object in view. Was there no possibility of taking more positive action in the matter, in some way which should assume more shape and reality than only words? Was there nothing to be done, as well as said? Eh! *che volete?* You saw what Passaglia attempted to *do*, and what came of it.

The moment any positive move in the direction indicated is made, the parties implicated in it find themselves engaged, in open hostility, with an official authority of overwhelming force, while they are themselves wholly without any basis of operations, except their own zeal and readiness to sacrifice every thing to their convictions. For the most part, their old friends among the clergy either abandon them altogether, or begin to look shy upon them, afraid of the consequences for themselves, if they act otherwise. There may be, and no doubt are, many who sympathize with them; but the chief anxiety of such sympathizers is generally to keep themselves fairly out of sight. The general public is, as yet, either too indifferent to such questions, or too inexperienced in self-government and independent action in religious affairs, to afford any effectual support. The Government holds itself aloof from such strug-

gles, for fear of embittering still more its relations with the Church, and so making its own political position worse than it is. Briefly, the parties attempting any overt act of reformation are soon left isolated (like ourselves), to struggle with the difficulties of their situation, exposed to the full burst of the wrath of their superiors.

But is it true, I asked again, that so very large a portion of the Italian clergy are placed in so precarious a position, and absolutely dependent upon their daily mass, and upon the opportunity given them of performing it, for their daily bread? Certainly (I was told) it is so; a very large majority (as I understood) of the secular clergy are thus absolutely dependent for their subsistence. One reason of this is, besides the despotic authority which allows a priest to be interdicted at the mere will or whim of his superiors, the very low class from which the great body of the clergy is now drawn, and the wretched instruction (education it cannot be called) which they receive. The consequence is, that they do not possess any fortune or independent means of livelihood, however small, nor have they been taught, for the most part, any thing to make them capable of earning their bread in other ways. They are literally paupers, who can

do nothing but say a mass for their subsistence, and serve as useful instruments, in the hands of others, for keeping the people under spiritual subjection, through the Confessional and refusal of the sacraments.

And this accounts (I was told, in answer to another question to that effect) in a great measure, for the otherwise inexplicable phenomenon of what has become of Passaglia and his nine thousand priests, and why so apparently vast a movement—and one which, in a country like England, might have been capable of such great results, and would have infallibly left such lasting marks of its presence behind—seems here already, in Italy, to have become a myth, and vanished into thin air. The vast majority of the priests, who subscribed to Passaglia's protest against the temporal power, were men of the above low caste and description. "Such men" (and, remark, that it was one who had himself collected some three thousand signatures to the document in question, who made use of the expression)—"Such men attach very little importance to signing any thing," and will easily abjure the second day, what they have pledged themselves to on the first. They signed, doubtless, with some vague hope, perhaps, of shaking off their

bondage, or under the idea that they were doing something which should secure them a living, independent of the caprice and tyranny of their superiors. But when they had done this and stood out a few days, and found that their mass was refused them at the sacristy, and that they were threatened with a permanent interdiction from their only means of getting a living, unless they repented of their act of insubordination (such as it was) and succumbed — then they withdrew their names, and thought no more about the matter, but went on again in the same hopeless routine way; all, that is, except the comparatively few among them who signed upon principle and deep conviction, with a thorough knowledge of what they were doing, and of the consequences it entailed, and with a determination to stand by them.

These men, a really chosen band, still maintain the struggle, resolutely, though isolated, and against tremendous odds. Their superior attainments enable them occasionally to turn to other employments, now that they are excluded from their office as ordained priests. The Government gives them a lift, now and then, in the shape of an appointment to a professorship, in a Lycée or University. Others of them, again,

find occupation in what they seem to regard as their only means of action for the present, in *la stampa*, the religious press,—in such journals as the *Esaminatore*, or the *Emancipatore Cattolico*. But it is evidently up-hill work with them; and it ought, I think, to become a serious question with English Churchmen, in spite even of a not unnatural hesitation in point of principle in one respect, and on account of all that there is to be done at home amongst ourselves on the other side, whether they ought not to stretch out a right hand of sympathy and fellowship with such men, more directly and effectually than has been hitherto done.

Remember that *these* are the men of Italy who, in their religious feelings and views, sympathize *par excellence* with *us*. There are plenty more here who sympathize with others, and are sympathized with by them in turn. I have shown above, in some slight degree, where and how the ground is already occupied, what is going on between other religious movements among the Italian people, and those who feel that they can conscientiously encourage and aid them, in our own country. The Waldenses, for example, stood in need of help. An eminent member of the Scottish communion, resident in Italy,

saw that *then was the moment* for help to be given, when the cause that the Waldenses represent in this country was just lifting its head, after its long dejection. And what does he do? He writes to four members of his own communion, proposing that each of them should contribute the sum of 1000*l.* towards the object in view, and as material aid to those in Italy who sympathize religiously with themselves. Wonderful to say, he does not meet with a single refusal to this prodigious call. The 4000*l.* are at once forthcoming, and the Waldenses are installed in the comfortable and substantial basis of operations I described in a former letter. They are not allowed to feel isolated, hopeless, helpless, in face of their former persecutors and present opponents. And shall the Church of England alone, "on principle," refuse all, or almost all material aid to those who so look towards her, and would so fain act with, or even under her? Must we *do* nothing, on behalf of those who so stretch out their hands to us, except sympathize, expose, timidly suggest, perhaps, or advise; and that for fear of being called guilty of schism? And what is the schism, it may be asked, of which there is question, and who are they who would call us schismatics? Is it not the very same which we

carried out for ourselves long ago, and are they not the same who branded us long ago with the name?

But are we, or do we feel ourselves to be, schismatics or heretics, simply because Rome, in her arrogance, chooses to use bad language? "Schismatic thyself!" retorts the Abbé Guetté, in his volume entitled *Rome Schismatique*, for which the University of Moscow conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. If we can lay our hands on our own hearts and consciences securely, on the point—and, surely, few can fail to do so after reading Dr. Pusey's recent pages—what matter by what bad names Rome designates either what we have done for ourselves, or what we help others to do for themselves? What we feel at liberty to encourage by words, surely we may lawfully assist by deeds;—are, indeed, bound to do so, unless we would fall under the same reproach in our religious which we so often do (be it justly or unjustly) in our political action—viz., that we incite nations by our language and promises, but fail them at the moment of need. It will be said, indeed, that we are willing to encourage and even to assist up to a certain point, but not to the extent of supporting clergymen in open revolt against their superiors, or set-

ting up Church against Church; otherwise we should be doing in Italy, what Rome is wrongfully and schismatically doing in England.

But consider what the position of these men is, whose cause I am endeavouring to bring before the notice of English Churchmen, and what our own position would be in assisting them, as compared with that of Rome. The Pope is endeavouring to introduce and enforce among ourselves doctrines and practices, which we most firmly and conscientiously believe (to use no stronger language) to be both un-Catholic and un-Christian. These men are seeking to restore, and asking us to help them to restore, in Italy, what both they and we firmly and conscientiously believe to be most Catholic and most Christian, in opposition to what we both equally believe to be most the contrary. The contest is, in our eyes, purely between Catholicism and Popery, between the Catholic Church and the Roman Curia. Can there be schism, or risk of schism, in supporting against *any thing* what we firmly believe to be the cause of the former? What we have got to look to is, that the cause which the Church of England is solicited to give her aid to, be that which alone she can consistently uphold against any adversaries, the cause of the Church Catholic. Once

convinced of that, I can scarcely conceive hesitation to be possible.

I had intended to follow up the above remarks with some further statements and facts respecting the position, views, claims, proceedings, and numbers of the reforming Church party in Italy, but I must reserve what I had to say for another occasion.

Our long-drawn-out elections have at last terminated, and on the whole satisfactorily; the result, however, can still only be stated broadly, as being that of a large majority returned of "Liberal" members. The clerical party in the Chamber I have heard variously estimated at from ten to thirty. Their defeat in Tuscany was most complete at the last, and their success, even in the South, by no means of a character to compensate for it. There were nineteen cases, out of the thirty-one electoral colleges of Tuscany, in which the clerical candidates were in a sufficiently good position, after the first ballot, to claim the chance of a second trial, in competition with a Liberal. In the other twelve colleges, the second contest lay only between two Liberals. Out of the nineteen cases above mentioned, the clerical party were finally successful only in *two;* and even one of these was in the person of a candidate who is likely to vote

as often with the moderate Liberals, as with the party who put him forward. The defeat was, therefore, in every respect, crushing and decisive. The heads of the party, however, have managed to get in, Cesare Cantù and D'Ondes Reggio having both been returned in the South, and Professor Corti in Tuscany. These are formidable speakers and debaters, and will doubtless give much trouble in a new and inexperienced Assembly, about to enter upon the discussion of ecclesiastical questions of the greatest delicacy and importance.

LETTER VII.

Nature and Extent of Catholic Reform Movement—Parties and Individuals from whom it proceeds—Their Views and Motives—Passaglia, his Failure, and Causes of it—Monsignore Tiboni—Count Tasca—Deputy Morelli, &c.—Strong Case of Mongini at Oggebbio—Canonico Eusebio Reali—Don Ambrogio—Conversion and Labours of Varnier and Anelli—Reform Movements in Naples—Monsignore Caputo—Padre Gabrielli da Viareggio—The Capuchins of the Province of Basilicata and Salerno.

Florence, Nov. 11th, 1865.

I PROPOSED in my last letter to lay before you some facts, partly coming under my own observation, partly derived from communications worthy of confidence, which may serve to demonstrate the nature and extent of the reform movement of Italy in a Catholic sense, the parties or individuals from whom it proceeds, their trustworthiness, and the obligation imposed on ourselves, both by their views and motives, to sympathize with and assist them.

And here I must observe that such information necessarily assumes a scattered and disconnected form—a form, I had almost said, of shreds and patches; just as the movement itself, though

evidently wide and general, and diffused more or less all over the land, breaks out and exists only at points, and is often sustained only by individual action, or by that of a few self-sacrificing and energetic men; but is, for the moment at least, devoid; in a great measure, of cohesion and general organization. This is why it is somewhat difficult at first either to seize, or appreciate it at its true force. The knowledge and right conception of it come by piecemeal and driblets, and cannot, indeed, come at all, without a little time and patience.

The conviction, however, which is ultimately conveyed is not the less strong, though it be not derived from any one great and striking demonstration. There was a time, indeed, when such a demonstration of religious movement in Italy seemed to stare us in the face in a manner impossible to be overlooked, and to promise great and immediate results. This was, of course, the moment when Passaglia, and his nine thousand priests, petitioned or protested against the temporal power. But, by general agreement, that movement has at once failed, and done harm by its failure to the cause it sought to promote. There may be differences of opinion as to the reasons which have produced this result, but there seem to be none as to the result itself. As far as

I am myself able to judge of the want of success, I should say that it proceeded from several causes. First, the movement was too purely clerical, and neither embodied, nor therefore carried along with it sufficiently the lay element and the nation. Next, it was too restricted in its views, and while proclaiming the abolition of the temporal power of the Pope and the reform of the discipline of the Church, it held up the prerogative of the spiritual power to the extremest verge of the present Papal pretensions. Certainly, no such limitation as that would satisfy the liberal and intelligent Catholic party of Italy, at the present hour.

The movement failed, again, by the unfitness of both its component parts to follow it out. I have before intimated of what elements the vast majority of the subscribing priests consisted, and how little likely, or even able, perhaps, they were to stand to their engagements in the hour of trial. Nor was their leader, apparently, better suited to the task than his followers, as soon as ever that task assumed, as it was almost certain to do, the form and dimensions of what ought to have been a great popular movement. By general assent, Passaglia, great in his cell and among his books and authorities, as a scholastic divine, was altogether unsuited to head a party in public life. At all events, he

seems to have disappointed every one when he attempted to do so, and play the part, as it was absolutely necessary he should, of a popular speaker, writer, politician, and great party leader. His entrance into the Chamber, at best perhaps a doubtful step, could only have been sustained and justified by great judgment and success in conduct and great oratorical power, and he notoriously failed in both.

I will not allude further to certain rumoured details of his social life since he has been at Turin, because it seems difficult fully to authenticate them. But they have certainly, whether justly or unjustly, aided in bringing about the general neglect into which he has fallen, and his party and movement along with him. They have been succeeded, or more correctly, perhaps, I should say, are gradually being succeeded, by the men and things I am about to mention.

Foremost among ecclesiastical reformers of larger views than Passaglia stands Monsignore Tiboni, the well-known Canon of Brescia, and for twenty-four years head of the theological seminary of that diocese. He may be briefly described as an example of what can scarcely, perhaps, be found in all France, among clergymen of his rank—viz., as an open and avowed Gallican. His pamphlet

entitled *Observations on the Declarations of the Gallican Clergy of* 1682 *respecting the Power of the Church* (Brescia, 1864) leaves no doubt on that head. He was, indeed, removed from his post by the Bishop, on account of his liberal opinions. He is heart and soul with the national movement, as as well as with that of religious reform, on the basis of which I shall hereafter speak more particularly. One of his most remarkable works is the *Secularization of the Bible*, of which the title explains at once the object. Another is *La Santa Sede e la Curia Romana*, showing the difference, now so much insisted on by Italian reformers, between the Catholic primacy of the Bishopric of Rome and the exaggerated pretensions of the Papal clique; a question still further treated of and illustrated in another publication of Tiboni's, *Quando sia infallibile il Papa*. I am assured that all his old pupils of the Seminary secretly, if not openly, coincide with him in his opinions; and it may readily be imagined, how wide has been the teaching and how large the influence spread over an interval of nearly a quarter of a century. I could mention, were it safe or advisable to do so, many other details respecting Monsignore Tiboni and his connexion with the reforming party, which would show how important the movement

is in that direction, and the interest he takes in it.

Another instance of the same spirit in operation amongst laymen is that of Count Tasca, of Seriate, close to Bergamo, a noble of high family, who was many years resident in England, is well acquainted with the English Church and her teaching, and fully prepared to meet us half-way in any project for the reconciliation of Christendom. He cannot, indeed, afford better proof of the estimation in which he holds us than by acting as he does. Thanks to him, the knowledge of our Liturgy is spreading far and wide in Northern Italy and Lombardy. Just at the present moment, for instance, in anticipation of the cholera, and as the best spiritual preparation for meeting the scourge, he has had printed separately, for the use of the people, three thousand copies of our Litany. The edition is entitled, "The Litanies, according to the use of the United Church of England and Ireland, taken from the Book of Common Prayer." In the short prefatory note appended to this issue, he says: "The Litanies contained in the golden Book of Common Prayer of the United Catholic Church of England and Ireland comprise in themselves so great a love of God, so lively a confidence in the mediation of Christ our Saviour, so much

faith in Divine Providence, and so ardent a charity for our neighbour, that it is no wonder our people received with so much favour the Italian translations, twice distributed by me among them in former years." To no one, perhaps, is the Church of England more indebted than to this Catholic nobleman, for the dissemination of a knowledge of her tenets and teaching among his countrymen. I have before me now, translated and widely propagated by him, the "Paraphrase on the Creed," after Pearson, published by Bishop Wordsworth only in July last; the Catechism, the Marriage and Burial Services, as well as those for Ordination and Confirmation:—all printed separately, in a cheap and popular form, from our Prayer Book, and so, calculated to find their way into the hands of all classes of the population.

It is only just towards this gentleman to mention, that when the young King of Portugal recently arrived at Turin, and learnt that Count Tasca was in that city, he sent an officer of his household to invite him to breakfast. After receiving him with great kindness, when breakfast was over, the King drew him aside, and said: "It has been a real pleasure to me, to make the personal acquaintance of one whom I have so long known by name. You have many decorations,

and you deserve them all. As a testimony of the esteem in which I hold your person and character, I, also, wish to add one more; and I therefore name you Chevalier First Class of the Order of the Conception, which is the highest among the orders of my kingdom." Does not such language, which I report *verbatim*, addressed by the "Most Faithful" Sovereign of Europe to a man employed as I have just stated Count Tasca to be, speak volumes as to the changed tone and sentiments of Christendom in a certain direction?

At Bergamo itself, again, we find another centre of the same movement in the person of another layman, Deputy Morelli, just re-elected for that place, and author of one of the boldest pamphlets yet published in Italy on the subject—*La Parola di Dio ed i Moderni Pharisei*. For this, he was openly rejected from communion, by the priests of his own parish church. The affair made some noise at the time. The Government, for once, interfered with a certain degree of firmness, and sent down orders to arrest the priests, on the ground that they had refused the rites of the Church without due cause and for political reasons, and, at all events, without due and formal sentence of excommunication, pronounced by a competent tribunal, against the individual implicated, and in

his own name: all which are, I understand, necessary before any one can be rightfully excluded, by the laws of the Church, from the benefits of communion. The priests were imprisoned and bailed out (for, I believe, 6000f.) by the Bishop of Bergamo, and the affair subsequently died away or was hushed up or compromised, like many other similar cases. I have quoted it chiefly to show the sort of thing which is constantly going on, and the conflict which is evermore kept up between the reforming and anti-reforming parties.

Another instance of the strong feeling of the intelligent laity on the same subject is found in Senator Siotto Pintor, Judge of the Supreme Court of Milan. The reform movement strikingly manifested itself in his person by a pamphlet entitled *Lettera ai Vescovi*, or letter addressed to the Catholic Bishops assembled at Rome on pretence of canonizing the Japanese martyrs, but really to support the temporal power of the Pope. At Turin, again, we have, in the publication of Dr. E. Serra-Gropeili, entitled *Parrochie e Diocesi*, a new proof of the feeling which exists so generally among laymen, that there can be no hope of reconciliation between their country and its religious ministers, so long as Rome remains

under Jesuit teaching and influence. The tyranny exercised by the Bishops over the minor clergy is there set forth with great weight and authority.

The case of the parish priest of Oggebbio, on the Lago Maggiore, by name Mongini, is still graver than any of the above by the circumstances which accompanied it. He was interrogated by his Bishop respecting his liberal opinions in politics and religion, which he made no secret of, nor attempted to conceal. He was thereupon, and for no other cause, solemnly excommunicated for his adhesion to the cause of his country, and for his opposition to the exaggerated pretensions of the Holy See. This was no case merely of simple and arbitrary suspension by the Bishop *ex informatâ conscientiâ*, as it is termed, and without cause assigned. It was more than had been done even in the case of Passaglia, where no specification of names was made. It was, in fact, the major excommunication, with even the *vitando* clause, admonishing all the faithful to avoid communication with the excommunicated person. Mongini, however, being extremely popular in his parish, and being supported by the refusal of the Government to grant the *excquatur*—after which alone the sentence of excommunication

could be legally published or served upon him within the Italian kingdom—simply stood his ground against what he conceived to be ecclesiastical tyranny, and continued in the performance of his religious duties. His parishioners joined with him in this determination, and continued to frequent his ministry. The King even sent him the cross of Cavaliere. But about the time when there seemed a chance of reopening negotiations with Rome, through Vegezzi, the Government, as an act of conciliation, withdrew Mongini, to propitiate the Bishop of Novara, and provided for him elsewhere. But a stronger case could scarcely be quoted of the "irrepressible conflict," which is every where smouldering and every where ready to break out afresh.

The Canonico Eusebio Reali, of St. John Lateran, is another well-known example of the treatment which all receive from Rome, who venture to oppose her pretensions. He strongly supported the reform movement in such works as *La Chiesa e l'Italia*, was placed on the index, and suspended from his functions. He is now an open and ardent supporter of liberty of conscience, and of the abolition of the monastic orders. With respect to the Jesuits, his long experience of them in Rome has had such an effect on him, as

to make his opinions altogether exceptional with respect to them. He would not only abolish them, but make their institution an offence against civil society, and punishable by the criminal law. Yet the Canonico is in every respect a staunch Catholic in feeling and doctrine, and simply desirous to see reform carried out in his Church, as it is. He has just been appointed to a professorship at Sienna. But he is about to undertake the lead in a movement, just now making, of considerable importance. It is proposed to open conferences on the subject of Catholic reform at Milan, and subsequently in other capital cities of Italy, in which the doctrines and purposes of the reforming party in the Church shall be clearly set forth, by members both of the clergy and laity. The results of such a step may, it is thought, be very important, as it will afford one of the few occasions for the pent-up feeling of which I speak finding open vent.

Perhaps, however, the most celebrated reform missionary in Italy, at the present moment, is the well-known and somewhat eccentric Don Ambrogio, a priest of Piedmont, who goes about preaching in the open air in town and country, sometimes in the villages, sometimes under the porticos of Turin itself, where he was once taken

into custody by the police, at the suggestion of the clergy, but dismissed after examination, because no fault could be found with what he either said or did. At Ivrea, again, he was once fairly carried into the church itself by the people, whether he would or not, and despite the Curé, and made to preach there. One of his most efficacious means of spreading his reforming opinions is in the shape of short, spicy dialogues and discourses printed on a fly-sheet, and sold for almost nothing. Of these he has distributed, within the year, nearly 30,000.

I have copies of eleven of these compositions now lying before me, and very admirably calculated they are for the object they have in view, both as regards style and matter. Five of them are entitled the "Five Plagues of Italy," which are designated to be the "Pope-king," "Friars and Monks," "Celibacy of the Priesthood," the "Retrograde High Clergy," and "Papal Superstitions." These are in the form of dialogues, and written in a popular phraseology, of which Don Ambrogio appears to be a consummate master. Another of them is entitled *Dialogue between a Priest of the Italian National Church and another Priest of the Church of the Pope.* It is very pungently and amusingly written, and makes sad

havoc among what it calls the *preti papalini*. Other subjects chosen are *La Confessione*, in a dialogue between the same parties. One of these papers sets forth with great force and pathos the "Principles and Rules of the Catholic, Apostolic Italian Church, Free Church of Jesus Christ our Saviour," and concludes with a very earnest Prayer to the Three Persons of the Trinity, to aid and assist the writer in preaching true doctrines. In a letter recently received from Don Ambrogio where he now is—for lately he was in the diocese of Mondovi—and from which I quote, he says he there met with great success in his preaching, and disposed of a large number of New Testaments, to the great chagrin of the Bishop. "We ought to hope," he says, "that the principles of a national Italian Church, which I uphold, will be received and will restore to us the true Church of Jesus Christ our Saviour." It must be remembered that in every respect except his opposition to the jurisdiction of Rome, Don Ambrogio also is a firm Catholic. Of the importance attributed by his opponents to the work carried on by him, it is scarcely possible to give a stronger proof than what has just occurred in the diocese of Mondovi above spoken of, and in the columns of the organ of the ultramontane and Jesuit party at Turin, the *Unità*

Cattolica. A certain number of the clergy, invited, or perhaps compelled, by the Bishop to make a "demonstration" on the occasion of the presence of Don Ambrogio in the diocese, have joined, voluntarily or involuntarily, in a "Protest" against his preaching, expressive of their "horror" at his heretical doctrines and the "scandal" created by them, and proposing a *neuvàine* to purge the diocese from such contamination. The *Unità Cattolica* honours this Protest with insertion, and abuses Don Ambrogio in its usual well-known style.

An incident which occurred very recently at Milan, in consequence of Don Ambrogio's preaching, and which threatened at one moment to interfere seriously with the public peace, shows the scenes which sometimes result from it, and also how high the spirit of religious dissatisfaction runs in that city, as well as elsewhere in Italy.

The Bishop of Mondovi, originally a preaching friar of considerable repute, author of a singularly superstitious book of popular devotion, severely lashed by Passaglia a few years ago, entitled *L'Anello, Libro di Salute per Tutti*, and now a prominent ultramontane prelate, went from his own diocese to Milan, to preach the Novena of the Immaculate Conception in the Cathedral. In the course of his sermons, he one day put forth the

peculiar doctrines of his party with great vehemence, blending the exposition, as usual, with a display of equally violent anti-national sentiments. Some individual in the congregation interrupted him by exclaiming, "That is not the just law;" "Let him preach the doctrine of Christ;" "Do not believe him;" with other similar exclamations. A priest, who was present, hearing them, called out, in his turn, to the interrupter, "You are a Protestant." Something like a turmoil ensued in the church, in the course of which the first speaker was apprehended, but subsequently let go. The day following, however, Don Ambrogio appeared upon the same scene, and created a still more lively excitement. He was himself formerly a priest in the diocese of the Bishop of Mondovi; but, having there given expression to his reforming tendencies, was excommunicated, or, at least, suspended *à divinis*, as has been said, and thereupon commenced the career which has since made him so conspicuous. Having heard that his former bishop had gone to Milan to preach the Novena of the Immaculate Conception, he resolved to follow him there, and preach in opposition to him; and on the day after the occurrences above mentioned, he commenced proceedings by preaching on the steps, outside the

Cathedral, while the Bishop preached within. A large crowd had speedily assembled in the piazza to hear him, and were apparently listening with great attention and curiosity to his exposition of Roman errors, when suddenly a troop of sacristans and others connected with the Cathedral, some armed with sticks, rushed out and began to refute Don Ambrogio with the *argumentum ad hominem*, crying out, "Give it him—give it him; down with the Protestant!" The crowd defending him, a complete street row ensued, and Don Ambrogio was finally removed to the Questura, in the custody of the police. On the morning of the *fête* itself of the Immaculate Conception, some one fixed a petard to the front of the pulpit, which exploded just as the Bishop began to preach, creating, of course, immense confusion. The Bishop commenced his discourse, by returning thanks to the Blessed Virgin and San Carlo Borromeo for his miraculous preservation. But the authorities of the city, becoming alarmed at these continuous scenes of commotion, telegraphed to the Government for instructions, and the Minister replied by transmitting orders to make the Bishop desist from further public functions in Milan, on pain of being sent back forcibly to his diocese; and thus both parties were silenced.

Such scenes recall vividly the period of the sixteenth century, and the violent oscillations of Reformation days long ago. I record them, I need scarcely say, not approvingly on either side, for they are scandalous to any Church and to any creed, and both the provocation and the retort were alike unseemly and unchristian. But the knowledge of them is useful as showing the spirit which is ready to break out in the great cities of Italy, such as Milan, and what the temper of the times is both as regards the clergy, the people, and the secular Government.

I must refrain, at all events for the present, from doing more than mention in a summary manner such men as Perfetti, author of *Il Clero e la Società*, and now a Professor at Sienna, suspended, of course, from ecclesiastical functions; or Boboni, Hebrew Professor at Sienna; or Canonico Ghiringelli of Bellinzona, about to take an active part, I believe, in the conferences at Milan and elsewhere, above spoken of; together with a host of others, all working individually in the same direction, but at present unfortunately without union or organization, and exposed like atoms to the full violence of the blast which every now and then comes upon them from Rome. I must also leave for another opportunity mention

of the movement in the Ticino, whereby the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Como has been entirely thrown off and repudiated, and a declaration adopted, analogous to our own English one, to wit, that "no foreign priest or potentate hath any rule or jurisdiction within that district." The congregation, under a reforming priest at Genoa, has been already fully spoken of.

At Intra, again, the English Prayer Book is absolutely used, and communion in both kinds administered monthly according to our offices, by Anelli and other Italian priests. Another instance of the same spirit absolutely at work is that of Varnier, at Messina, where the same things are taking place. The past lives and conversion of both these men, Anelli and Varnier, as well as their present work, deserve some short notice. Both have had a singular course. Both left Italy for India, as Roman Catholic Missionaries; both mastered English sufficiently to become chaplains to our Roman Catholic troops in India; both were led to join our communion in India. The conversion of Varnier was mainly owing, I understand, to the study of the Rev. Harold Browne's (now Bishop of Ely) excellent "Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles," after he had been previously staggered by the dogmas of the Immaculate Con-

deption. As a Franciscan, he seems always to have leaned to the "pious opinion," as he held it, on that point; but was shocked at having it enforced upon him as a dogma. Anelli was led to abjure the errors of Rome by a different line of reasoning and circumstances; and principally, it appears, through the personal impression made on him by a devout and venerable old missionary of our own, who saw his earnest zeal to do whatever he could be convinced was right. Both Varnier and Anelli sacrificed to their convictions their posts of Roman Catholic military chaplains, and commenced work in India in connexion with our own Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in those parts.

But now comes the most wonderful part of this strange and eventful history, as regards Anelli, and which is so strange that I can even yet scarcely credit it, upon what seems, however, to be indubitable authority. Anelli is represented as having been literally kidnapped by Jesuit intrigue in Bombay, carried off by stealth (after being shut up for three days in the house of the Roman Catholic Vicar-General of Bombay) to the Portuguese settlement of Goa, shipped to the care of the Bishop of Marseilles, and thence handed over to the Cardinal Vicar at Rome, by

whom he was placed in a Carmelite convent in Perugia, where he might have remained to this day had not the revolution opened his prison doors. As I have said, I can hardly even yet give implicit credit to this extraordinary story, though it is probably well known to some of my readers; but I relate it as it came to me from reliable sources. Both Varnier and Anelli are now married to English wives; both, it need hardly be said, are ardent reformers; and both are represented as heartily labouring to convince their countrymen, that it is at once desirable and feasible to reform, not destroy, the organization of their own Church.

At Naples itself, I understand that no less than six churches are, by the good-will of the Government, carried on by priests suspended, as usual, from their functions for no other reasons than their national and anti-Papal views and opinions, and attended by large congregations, who pay no attention to the anathemas of the Archbishop, pronounced on such grounds. Cardinal Andrea has, I believe, given these persecuted ecclesiastics many tokens of his own good feeling and sympathy towards them.

The six churches above spoken of, as being in the hands of reforming priests at Naples, happen,

fortunately, to be under the special jurisdiction of the Cappellano Maggiore, an ecclesiastic whose office in the old kingdom of Naples was that of Chaplain-General, as we should call him, of the Army and Navy; but who also had special jurisdiction over the Royal chapels and churches ashore, such as, for instance, the large, well-known circular memorial church facing the Royal Palace, and a few others. The Cappellano Maggiore, when Naples was annexed to the present kingdom, was a Bishop, Monsignore Caputo. This special jurisdiction was granted by an old bull, which makes the Cappellano Maggiore independent of the Cardinal Archbishop of Naples. Hence, when the latter fulminated his censures and suspensions against these churches, and the clergy who officiated in them, Bishop Caputo quietly replied by simply publishing the bull conferring his peculiar jurisdiction, and the hostile Metropolitan was unable to interfere further. The Bishop is since dead, and the Government has appointed a successor, who is not, I believe, a Bishop; but as the same priests still continue to preach in the churches, it is to be presumed that care has been taken not to appoint any one to the office, who would attempt to put down their ministrations.

Another well-known Neapolitan Reformer, the

Padre Gabrielli da Viareggio, preaches in the great church of the Gesù Nuovo, which fell into the hands of the Government when Garibaldi expelled the Jesuits, to whom that magnificent church belonged. He has become the founder at Naples of the Society called the "*Fratellanza Cittadina di Misericordia*," for the tending and nursing of the poor sick, and the burial of the poor; the Rules and Constitution of which, framed on the broadest basis of charity, are very similar to those of the celebrated fraternity in this city, so well known in all our streets by their black vestments and masks. The principle of the new society professes to be the "*tolerantissimo spirito del Vangelo*." The society already numbered, last spring, 150 brothers and 50 sisters. The Padre himself went formerly, as volunteer chaplain, with the Tuscan volunteers who joined Garibaldi, into Sicily, and followed them to Naples. He took an active part in the *Plebiscito*, frequently addressing the people in the streets and public places, in favour of Union, and now receives the barest pittance as a preacher at the Gesù. He is regarded by all who know him as a sincere, earnest, conscientious man. Certainly, if these men do gain popularity or notoriety, they gain little else.

What has recently taken place in the Capuchin Order of the Province of Basilicata and Salerno ought not to be passed over without mention, as affording a striking proof of the unwillingness with which the mere administrative yoke of Rome (for doctrines there do not seem to have come into dispute) is borne by her most immediate dependents, to what an excess the bonds of ecclesiastical discipline are strained, and with what rude and almost scoffing alacrity they are shaken off, whenever a chance of doing so with success or impunity presents itself. The history of this quarrel is already, I doubt not, familiar to persons who have been in the habit of keeping their attention fixed upon the movements of religious bodies in Italy; but it may be well to give here a brief outline of it, for the benefit of those who have hitherto neither had opportunity nor sufficient interest to do so. The picture is one which goes far to destroy the hallucinations of universal peace, concord, and obedience, which were imagined to reign within the bosom of the Church of Rome.

It is well known that certain of the Mendicant Orders in the South of Italy and in Sicily, partly from the originally democratic form of their Institutes, partly from the majority of their members

being taken from the people and mixed up with the people and with popular movements, partly also from a desire to emancipate themselves from the tyranny of their superiors at Rome, eagerly seized upon the occasion which presented itself by the rupture of the former close relations existing between the Neapolitan Government and the Roman Curia, to give free vent to their dormant irritation and hostility. But none appear to have done this so effectually, and with such united purpose, as the Capuchin monks of the Province above spoken of. On the first occasion, after the Italian Revolution, of a new Provincial Head having to be appointed to their body, they availed themselves of what they considered, whether rightly or wrongly I do not pretend to decide, to be the virtual abrogation of the Concordat by the incorporation of the Neapolitan territory with the Italian kingdom, to revive the ancient principles of ecclesiastical law. According to these, they claimed the privilege, under the Rules of the Order, trodden under foot hitherto, as they pretend, by Rome, to elect their own Head by general vote, independent of the authority or interference of the General of the Order, who resides at Rome. By virtue of this power, which the Capuchins arrogated to themselves, they elected as their Provin-

cial Head the Padre Giovanni da Pescopagano, whose political principles may be sufficiently inferred from the fact of his being designated, in the published account of the transaction, as a "distinguished patriot."

Such an open act of insubordination was not, of course, long allowed to remain unnoticed or unreproved, at head-quarters. A decree, not only of deposition but of expulsion, against the Padre Giovanni, was speedily prepared by the General at Rome, and finally, after some delay, launched, when the "slight hopes entertained of seeing the wretched man repent," as the official letter of publication expresses it, had been exhausted. The terms of this letter, announcing to the Superiors of every conventual establishment within the province, and its members, that currency had been given to the decree of expulsion against the Padre Giovanni, *soi-disant* Provincial, are certainly sufficiently stringent and absolute. He is denounced, first, as a "corrupt and incorrigible member;" and "it is our will," says the letter, "that this our sentence shall have full force, as though communicated to the said Padre with all the required formalities." By what right the General relieved himself from the observance of such formalities, required, it is to be presumed,

by ecclesiastical law, is not stated. But if he thought that his informal decree of dismissal would be accepted without dispute by those to whom it was directed, he had soon reason to find himself mistaken. I have now before me the published copies of *thirty-six* letters, addressed, by as many Superiors of the Order, not to the General at Rome, acknowledging the receipt of his communication, and promising obedience to his decree, but to their own deposed and expelled Provincial, informing him of the General's communication and of the account they are disposed to make of it. The originals of the whole of these letters are announced to be deposited in the archives of the Convent of Salerno, and to be there open to the inspection of whoever desires to examine and compare them. And it is certainly highly necessary that such authenticity should be guaranteed, for otherwise the extraordinary language of these documents might well provoke an expression of incredulity from any one who peruses them. It is impossible, of course, for me to quote more than a few passages and expressions, out of such a vast number of letters; but they are in general so extremely forcible in their style, that a small number of specimens will suffice to show the spirit and feeling of the rest.

In the first place, then, every one almost of the letters begins by addressing the condemned and deposed Padre in the warmest, and most affectionate, and respectful terms. He is called: "*Molto Reverendo*," "*Amatissimo*," "*Rispettabilissimo*," "*Stimatissimo*," and other terms even of endearment. On the contrary, the missive of the General is spoken of under every form, not only of contempt, but even of scurrility and abuse. In one letter, it is a "vile reactionary document from the tyrant at Rome, to which not one of the brethren will accord even a suspicion of adherence." In another it is sent *al diavolo*, with all the other monopolies of Rome. Another says: "I have told the General that his paper is valueless without the royal *exequatur*, and altogether inadmissible, as contrary to the public rights of our Order." Another, that "the General only acts as he does, because our Province opposes the policy of the Curia." Several letters narrate, in the most contemptuous terms, that the General's communication was received, and "burnt directly." Another, that the same "had been read, but only to be laughed at." Many letters beg the Padre Giovanni to "take no notice of, and not trouble himself about, the matter." Many of the Superiors use expressions such as "froth," and "scum,"

which they beg to be excused. Others argue the question more seriously and decorously:—

"We desire," says one, "the unity of Italy, and Rome for capital. The General, and the clique which makes war on the most sacred principles of religion and country, have nothing to do with us. We are governed by you, most reverend Father, with prudence and wisdom; we are truly glad to have you as our Provincial, elected by the vote of the Province, according to the rules of our profession, and we shall always be ready to elect you again a thousand times." "The communication in question," says the last letter I shall quote from, "breathes only vengeance against patriotism and charity, and would destroy whatever is built upon the maxims of the Gospel, and sealed with the Blood of Christ the Redeemer, on the altar of the cross. Not to disturb further the serenity of my mind by thinking over it, I transmit it to you, most reverend Father, to make what use you please of it. Only, I myself, with the whole family of this my House, protest against the same, and above all against the ambitious wrath of Rome, who, with her pretended inspirations, would convert us into the correspondents and confidants of brigands, sent from that metropolis into this Province, to

fatten again in the pastures of despotism, and open an abyss in which we should all be lost for ever."

I have already, I fear, extended my quotations too far from this most remarkable series of letters, but they afford so striking an example of the internal gangrene which is often gnawing the very vitals of Rome, even her religious orders, beneath the apparent unity and tranquillity of the surface, that I would recommend the perusal of the entire series (printed at Salerno) to all those who imagine that peace is to be found only within her pale.

Into the merits of the above quarrel I have not at all entered, and have wholly abstained from speaking of them, because I have no sufficient knowledge for judging either the characters or the ecclesiastical acts of the respective parties. But the facts and the language are before us; and tell, at least, a tale of bitter and rancorous discord, such as could scarcely have been conceived, without the plain and positive evidence revealed of its existence.

I must reserve to be spoken of hereafter the precise views advocated and aimed at by such individuals and parties as the above, and the exposition hitherto made of them in the few organs of the press, or other limited means of publicity, which they at present possess. What I have

already stated will be sufficient, I trust, to set forth strongly, if somewhat confusedly and piecemeal, the breadth, and length, and depth, and extent of the movement, in strict unison with our own principles, which is undoubtedly going on throughout the whole of the Italian Peninsula. Detail, and far greater detail than I have either ventured on, or indeed have it in my power to go into, is, I feel sure, absolutely necessary in order to appreciate it fully, and as it deserves. There is, indeed, no other mode of indicating the *Catholic* religious movement of Italy, than by particularizing it almost *ad infinitum*. For, with the single exception, perhaps, of the Passaglia case, it has not, like the action of the Protestant bodies, both foreign and internal, hitherto manifested itself by open organization, and so made its working and development capable of being shortly summed up, by the mention of a few powerful associations. It is the work, at present, merely of individuals, or at most of small knots of individuals, struggling against fearful odds, under a fiery persecution, which wants only the power to proceed to far greater lengths against them, and which, even as it is, possesses almost unlimited authority to reduce its opponents to the very extremity of indigence.

LETTER VIII.

Principles and Objects of the Catholic Reformers—Their Organs and Programme—The *Esaminatore* of Florence—The *Emancipatore Cattolico* of Naples — The Central Reformation Society of Naples—Dr. Luigi Prota—Professor Stanislao Bianciardi — Opinion of the Protestant Organ, *Eco della Veritá*—Expression of Sympathy by the American Church—General Estimation of the Movement.

Florence, Nov. 18*th*, 1865.

I ENDEAVOURED, last week, to bring home to the intelligence of English readers the fact of the real existence in Italy of an internal and national movement, both lay and clerical, in favour of a reform of the Italian Church on Catholic principles. And I endeavoured to present this fact to their understanding, in the same way in which it presented itself to my own: viz., by the gradual disclosure of a number of details arising in all parts of the kingdom, and proceeding from a great variety of persons, all tending to the same conclusion.

I am very far from wishing to exaggerate the extent or importance of this movement, of the

very existence of which my readers must, I am sure, have seen that I remained for some time sceptical. But not only were the circumstances which I then narrated of very considerable importance, I think, of themselves, but they have left upon my own mind two convictions; first, that they are capable of being multiplied to a very great extent, by longer investigation and experience; and, secondly, that they require only favourable opportunity and encouragement, to assume a much wider development.

There is another observation, also, to be made with respect to the character of this movement, which is, I think, important; and that is, that it is both lay and clerical in its nature, and, therefore, more strictly national, and more likely to take permanent root and hold in the country, than that inaugurated by Passaglia. The latter, imposing as it was in appearance, both from numbers, from the high position of its leader, and the vigorous demonstration it at first made of its one peculiar project, was too much confined to a class, too much, perhaps, the mere offspring of a political situation, too much mixed up with the parties and politics of the day, to assume the form of a genuine religious aspiration after a higher spiritual condition.

Passaglia, indeed, is said to have always taken for granted, and intimated privately, though he did not proclaim it publicly, that, with the fall of the temporal power of the Papacy, must necessarily come a reform, and a sweeping reform, of the Papal ecclesiastical system. But at all events he did not make such a reform a part of his programme, which, therefore, rested upon a narrow and almost political basis. The present movement, on the contrary—which, though appearing only to succeed to that of Passaglia, really existed in germ before the latter, and was only for a time eclipsed by it—seems to make only a secondary consideration of the fall of the temporal power, or rather takes it for granted as a matter of course, and concentrates its own special action and interest almost entirely upon the spiritual objects and advantages which are to follow. In its programme, now lying before me, and to which I shall presently refer more fully, little or no mention is made of the temporal power; but a great deal is said about Confession, Celibacy, Episcopal jurisdiction, and like matters. But in order to present the subject in a more consecutive form, I proceed to follow up the circumstances which I narrated last week in evidence of the existence of the movement, by some exposition of

its principles, and of the precise objects it has in view.

Apart, then, from the expression of individual opinion, the objects of a movement so scattered in its members can only be summarily gathered from the organs which all alike seem to recognize as their exponents. The small religious press of which the reforming party can yet boast is confined to two journals, the *Esaminatore* of Florence, and the *Emancipatore Cattolico* of Naples; the latter being more especially the representative of the *Società Emancipatrice e di Mutuo Soccorso del Sacerdozio Italiano*—almost the solitary attempt at union and organization, which the promoters of the movement in Italy have been able to inaugurate.

I have now lying before me a *Memorandum* of the above society, kindly sent up to me from Naples by Dr. Prota, its head, and it may also be said its heart. This publication, dated June 25, professes to be a complete exposition of the views and objects of the movement, and would probably be accepted, with very slight shades of difference, by all who are parties to it from north to south. The propositions set forth in it have indeed appeared, almost identically the same, in both the organs above noticed, and may be assumed as the programme of the entire demonstration. They

are probably already within the knowledge of the majority of readers interested in such questions. But as the *Memorandum* of the Society is well calculated to place the whole question in its true light, I cannot, I think, do better than insert here a short analysis of its contents.

Addressing itself to its "brother Catholics," the document begins by declaring that the Italian nation feels an imperious necessity for religious reformation. It dates these aspirations from the times and teaching of such men as Savonarola, Arnald of Brescia, and Sarpi, the tradition of whom it declares still to be alive in every true Catholic heart, and their blood able to bear fruit in a restoration of religion to its primitive purity. The object and scope of the Society, now established for four years, is stated to be the emancipation of the Catholic clergy and laity from the yoke of an overbearing theocracy, the juridical and disciplinary reform of the Roman Catholic Church and the Papacy, and, as a principal means to this end, the abolition of the temporal power. The Society embraces the laity also, in order to render its action at once wider and more efficacious. To remove all doubt or equivocation as to its aims and objects, these are stated to be—

"1. To influence, both by example and teach-

ing, the consciences of the Faithful, and inform them what true Catholic faith and doctrine is.

"2. To instruct the masses in the respective rights of the Supreme Pontiff, the priesthood and the people, and their co-relative duties.

"3. To promote and make understood the necessity of an Œcumenic Council for the reform of the Church Catholic, according to the requirements of civilization among Christian people."

The above statement, it says, must convince every sincere Catholic that the object of the Society, during its four years' existence, has been the return of the Catholic Church to its primitive institutions. The watchword, indeed, of its organ, the *Emancipatore Cattolico*, has been ever *Catholic Reform.* With this view it has supported the abolition of celibacy; called the attention of the laity to the reassertion of their rights of ecclesiastical election; approved of the complete abolition of the monastic orders; proposed to the Government the institution of ecclesiastical colleges, and reminded again and again the Pontiff himself, that he is only Bishop of Rome and Primate of Christendom. The *Memorandum* then states, that the work of the society could scarcely be more than one of preparation. It notices the immense obstacles to be contended against, the inveterate

prejudices of the masses, the lukewarmness of the Government, as regards religion, the almost complete deficiency of financial resources wherewith to afford succour to the clergy who join it, and who are sure to be reduced to "the most squalid misery and starvation." The *Memorandum* then once more states its entire programme of Catholic Reformation, as comprised in the eight following articles :—

"1. The Pope to be Bishop of Rome and Primate of the Universal Church; and the Œcumenic Council, presided over by the Pope, to be supreme judge in questions of faith.

"2. The Bishops, Archbishops, and Metropolitans to be reinstated in the full rights of their diocesan jurisdiction, as exercised up to the end of the tenth, and beginning of the eleventh century.

"3. Integrity of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and of the free vote of the clergy and people in the election of Bishops, parochial clergy, and of the Pontiff himself.

"4. The Liturgy in the national language, with free circulation of the Scriptures, in the vulgar tongue.

"5. Sacramental confession to be voluntary on the part of the penitent Faithful, and in ac-

cordance with the canons of the third and fourth century, as regards the priestly jurisdiction.

"6. Restitution to all ordained priests of the consultative and deliberative vote, in the Diocesan and Provincial Synods.

"7. Abolition of obligatory celibacy.

"8. Full and complete liberty of conscience."

The *Memorandum* then states the material results which have, thus far, attended its action. These consist, in the foundation of 24 branch societies in various parts of the kingdom; in the enrolment under its programme of 971 priests, 852 laymen, and 340 honorary members, amongst whom figure 102 parish priests, 40 higher dignitaries, three ex-Ministers of Italy, 36 Deputies, and 11 Senators. The increase of associated members, from the 1st of May last to the publication of the *Memorandum*, amounts to 400. Will those who are interested in the honour and glory of the pure and immaculate religion of our fathers, the *Memorandum* asks, stretch out a fraternal hand? Now, it is declared, is the opportune moment to understand each other, for the moral regeneration of Christian humanity. The work of the Catholic emancipation of the Italian priesthood is a great and providential mission.

The above important and interesting document

is signed by Dr. Luigi Prota, president of the Central Society, residing at "our residence in St. Dominico Maggiore, at Naples." Prota, as is well known, is an ex-Dominican monk, still allowed to reside, with some of his former brethren, in a portion of one of the suppressed religious houses of Naples. He is the author of a variety of publications on the leading religious topics of the day, such as, for example, that entitled *Roma capitale della nazione Italiana*, of which the first edition was published as far back as 1861, when the question of Italian Unity had scarcely yet been even mooted, certainly by no portion of the clergy, in the south of Italy. The work, which was immediately placed in the Index, sold very largely on its first appearance, was received with immense applause, and may be regarded as the first movement towards national union, in a religious sense. It was republished last year.

A letter, by the same author, to the Pope, on the Encyclical, republished from the *Emancipatore* in the beginning of the present year, points out energetically the danger and ruin to the Church of such acts proceeding only from the private and personal authority of the Pope, without the Church being consulted, or the rights and duties of the Episcopacy being regarded.

Another publication, entitled "*Civil Marriage and the Celibacy of the Catholic Priesthood*," expresses the highest satisfaction at the law recently promulgated in this country on the question. Dr. Prota regards the Code Napoléon as essentially deficient in this respect, inasmuch as, while on every other point it professes the subordination of the Church to the State, on that of the marriage of priests, it places the rules of ecclesiastical discipline above its own laws, quoting the case of the Abbé Chataigneu, in which the Tribunal of Angoulême decided, last year, that a French priest was not competent to contract even a civil marriage.

In a recent number of the *Emancipatore* (October 30th), a letter of Dr. Prota's appears in reply to demands of advice respecting the marriage of priests from a number of colleagues, placed in similar circumstances with himself as regards Rome. He there speaks of marriage as being, in his opinion, the grand step towards the moral regeneration of the Catholic clergy, and the disciplinary reform of the Church. He points out that, under the law just passed, no priest can be prevented from contracting marriage by his Bishop, or troubled in the possession of his cure for so doing. His advice to them is, distinctly, to marry, and remain in the exercise of their ministry;

"and the more who do so," he adds, "at once and simultaneously, the safer for all; for the Bishops will venture the less to prosecute you, in face of public opinion." This may appear to some persons to be going great lengths; but I have thought it right to state Dr. Prota's opinions fully on the point, in order that the views of the reforming party may be perfectly clear. I observe that in a little publication on the same subject, which has just appeared from the pen of De Sanctis, he leaves the question of to marry or not to marry entirely to the private conscience of each priest. But, while applauding the new law in all other respects, he adds the following especial commendation of it: "To me," he says, "one of the most precious provisions of this law is, that in no case whatever does it admit of divorce."

To return, however, to the *Memorandum* above spoken of, its principles would, I believe, be accepted, with few exceptions, by the whole of the reforming Catholic party in Italy. All the principal conditions, indeed, of the Southern programme, with a few others even somewhat more advanced, had been previously produced by the *Esaminatore* (June 12th), the chief organ of the party which corresponds, here in Florence and in the North, to that of Prota in the South. The

Esaminatore is directly supported by the sympathy and even the material aid of Baron Ricasoli, from whom I have seen letters of great kindness and hearty good-will to its excellent editor, Dr. and Professor Stanislao Bianciardi, the popular author of the well-known *Veglie del Prior Luca*, or papers on the prevailing topics of the day. In his *History of the Popes*, published in 1861 by the same author, will be found a very touching and interesting episode of his boyhood and education by his father, a most worthy parish priest, who entered holy orders when left a widower with an only child. In the commencement of the same work (page 24) will also be found laid down with great earnestness, simplicity, and unction, the religious convictions which then grew up in the mind of the future editor of a reforming organ: the "necessity of distinguishing absolutely between two things completely opposed to each other, the Catholic religion and the Roman Curia." Then also, as well as more recently, the objections of the writer are plainly stated against the infallibility and omnipotence of the Pope, against Confession, Masses, the worship of saints, the celibacy of the priesthood, the prohibition, direct or indirect, expressed or understood, to read the Word of God.

I have mentioned these particulars respecting Bianciardi, because a pious education, long consistency of principles, and the esteem and support of such men as Ricasoli cannot but prove a strong guarantee of the motives which prompt him, as the exponent of a party. I cannot but hope that such declarations of principles and views as the above may tend to remove the not unnatural hesitation felt by many members of the Church of England to give more efficient and direct aid than mere sympathy, to men engaged in a most unequal struggle, against tremendous odds. If sacrifice be any test of sincerity and earnestness, these men certainly ought to be both sincere and earnest; for, as far as I can discover, they seem only to gain the loss of every thing they have in the world, in possession and prospect, and to make themselves powerful and rancorous enemies, by their movement. They get nothing, or next to nothing, from the Government, and the country, as yet, looks on, for the most part, with cold and, above all, ignorant indifference. The chief notice they attract is from the uppermost regions of ecclesiastical authority, and that not by any means of an agreeable or encouraging description.

Just as I am endeavouring to set before the

reader the reality of this movement, its nature and objects, a publication comes to hand which is of assistance in both these respects. The last number of the *Eco della Verità* (11th November), in an article entitled "Neo-Catholicism," helps us to recognize both the extent of the Catholic reformatory action, and to determine what it is, by proving to us at least what it is not. Clearly it is not "Protestantism," in the objectionable sense of the term, or as understood by Protestants themselves; for here is a strong attack against those who promote or support the movement, by the recognized Protestant organ. The article is no doubt from the pen of De Sanctis. His writing it at all, at this moment, shows that his attention must have been roused to the progress making by the principle he combats. But perhaps nothing will avail more to induce some persons among ourselves to encourage the neo-Catholic movement, than the following observations, addressed directly to themselves, by De Sanctis, to dissuade them from so acting:—

"In the first place (he writes), we wish that certain reverend gentlemen of the 'High' Anglican Church, who encourage this neo-Catholicism amongst us, would open their eyes a little. Let

these reverend persons remember that they have sworn to observe the Thirty-nine Articles of the Anglican Church, the greater part of which condemn the doctrine of Roman Catholicism. With what conscience, then, can they favour a pretended reform, which protests its wish to preserve all those doctrines opposed to their own profession of faith? For the present, we will say no more on this head. But as we conscientiously believe that the propagation of neo-Catholicism in Italy is most injurious to religion and the development of the nation, it may happen that we may one day feel ourselves under an imperative obligation to unveil all that they are doing in this respect, by naming their *agents* (*sic*) and the means which they adopt. We love and esteem more a Catholic, though a bigot, if sincere, than a neo-Catholic, who is neither a Catholic nor Protestant."

The whole fallacy of the above passage lies, of course, in the flagrant substitution which takes place of *Roman* Catholicism in the second, for *neo*-Catholicism in the first sentence. But I have simply quoted it here to prove, for the satisfaction of some persons, how Catholic and how "un-Protestant" the movement which it denounces really is.

Another testimony to the same effect has just reached me, even while I write these lines, in the shape of the "memorial of the Rev. William Chauncy Langdon," addressed to the General Convention of the American Episcopal Church at Philadelphia, upon the subject of the reform movement in the Church of Italy; and soliciting for it the sympathy and support of that branch of our own Church, on the express ground of its Catholic character, and non-identity with other religious efforts based on different principles. The result, as is doubtless by this time well known to English Churchmen, has been the nomination of a committee by both Houses of the American Convention, charged to inquire into, and empowered even to render aid to the Italian reformers. It so happened that just before receiving the above "memorial," I was reading a letter of recent date from Dr. Prota himself, in which he said, perhaps despondingly, that "he had received no tidings from America." The receipt of such a document as the above, and the resolutions passed upon it, will doubtless prove a great encouragement to him to persevere. In the same letter he writes :—

"The affairs of our Society are going on well. But our associated priests are still under the fiery

persecutions of the Bishops, who hope yet for a *Concordat* between our Government and Rome. Had I but the means, I thought of making a journey to England, and there, in concert with some of our friends, giving some popular lectures on the scope of our Catholic emancipation, and thus interesting a few of the faithful to assist our arduous mission."

But not to weary my readers with further details, I will only venture to reiterate once more, before leaving this place, the interest I have been unable to prevent myself from feeling and expressing in the movement under consideration, and the hopes which I cannot but think it holds out of distant, perhaps, but permanent good results. There is something about it which is, I confess, more sympathetic to my own feelings than that originated by Passaglia, and which, with far less *éclat* and parade, promises, if prevented from being swamped by material obstacles, to work its way with more steadiness, persistence, and durability. There is even a certain modesty and humility about it, and about the tone of the men engaged in it, so far as I have seen or conversed with them, which at once touches and inspires confidence in them. They seem tenacious of principle, and careful not to commit

themselves to any thing they cannot strictly approve, or which they consider un-Catholic, for the sake merely of courting external support or aid. I particularly noticed, in one prominent individual, a sort of reserve and hesitation in this respect, as though he were not even yet sufficiently assured that he was himself un-Roman enough, and that we were un-Protestant enough, for us to act cordially together. I mean to point out, by this manner and conduct, how far it is from the thoughts or intentions of these men to jump down the throat of "Protestants," and ally themselves with such, or with any one, in order merely to thwart and oppose Rome. In a large file of manuscript letters which I was looking over the other day, addressed to the *Esaminatore* in token of sympathy, it was curious to see how many of the writers displayed great anxiety that they should not be identified with "*I Protestanti*," nor be mixed up with any movement which was simply of that character or denomination. The great effort every where seems to be to draw and keep up the one broad distinction, between Catholicism as it was, and what Rome and the Popes have made it.

The movement is sincere, earnest, and I believe profoundly Catholic, so far as it goes. But I

must again point out, in order to avoid exaggeration and misunderstanding, how limited it is in extent, how comparatively powerless in face of its opponents, often even timid in action, how small is the general sympathy or understanding it meets with from the nation at large, how little open favour it meets with from the Government, which perhaps even secretly bears it no great good-will, as rendering a "compromise" with the Pope more difficult. I have shown, too, how scattered and unorganized it is, how little it strikes or meets the eye at first, how little it is written about, and how it is scarcely talked about at all. I have endeavoured to show how it has to be picked up in scraps and details, before you quite believe even in its existence. I have shown it latterly, indeed, assuming in one quarter at least, at Naples, some slight degree of organization, raising its head rather more boldly, and enunciating its principles and objects with more satisfactory precision. In short, I have endeavoured, very inadequately, I fear, to convey to readers at home some correct idea of a subject, into a knowledge of which I have but been groping imperfectly myself in the course of a few weeks' experience, and on which the preoccupation of almost every one around, by very different subjects,

makes it extremely difficult to gain correct information, or draw correct conclusions.

I mentioned in a preceding letter that the postponement of the opening of Parliament, from the 15th to the 18th, was occasioned by the absence of King Victor Emmanuel, on a journey of encouragement and charity to the suffering populations of the South. His Majesty returned on Wednesday last, and must have been eminently gratified by his reception. To give the popular feeling an opportunity to show itself, the municipality announced publicly the hour of the King's arrival at the station. Nothing more was done, nor indeed needed. An immense crowd voluntarily assembled, literally to "meet the King;" just as any one would go to meet their own friends at a railway; and the greeting was not noisy, it was something better; it was really kindly and cordial. The same evening, Patti sang at the Pagliano Theatre. The King appeared there also, and when he entered his box, though at a critical moment of the music, the effect was electrical. Every one rose, and the fashionable audience called for him, and made him show his honest, burly face, again and again, with hearty good-will. In a few hours from this I hope, by the kind exertions of friends, to see him meet his Parlia-

ment for the first time in his new capital. My only remaining task will then be to send you some account of the ceremony from this place, before bidding adieu to Florence, and preparing to reach Paris once more in as short a time as the weather and the length of the journey will admit.

LETTER IX.

Apology for concluding Letter—Opening of an Italian Parliament for the first time in Florence—Importance of the Event, and of the Opinions promulgated in the King's Speech—Interior of the Palazzo Vecchio, and General Appearance of the Assembly—Reception given to the King, and to those parts of his Speech touching on the Affairs of Rome and the Church—Opinions and Proposals of the Liberal Catholic Party in Italy with respect to Rome, and the Re-organization and Administration of Church Property.

Florence, Nov. 20th, 1865.

THE main object of these communications terminated, naturally, with the preceding letter; and I owe, perhaps, some apology to my readers for detaining them over a few extra pages. But though the ceremony to the account of which I am about to ask their attention for a few moments longer, is political rather than religious in its bearings, and is only indirectly connected with what has formed the chief subject of my inquiries here; yet it is at once an occasion of too high interest in itself, and touches too closely, by the language made use of by the Sovereign, upon two of the most important points of religious contro-

versy in Italy, to be passed over altogether unnoticed by one who is on the spot. The mere assembling of the representatives of United Italy, for the first time, at Florence, in the ancient Palace of the Republic, is of itself a grand and imposing historical fact, and one which we may all hereafter look back upon with yet greater respect and curiosity as to its details, should it really prove the prelude to that new development of Italian greatness, which the nation now fondly anticipates.

The speech, too, delivered by Victor Emmanuel on the occasion, besides the allusions which it contains to the ordinary political and financial topics of the day, enunciates, for the first time, by the mouth of a King of Italy, those principles of the entire independence of the temporal with respect to the spiritual power, and of the distinctive attributes of each, which, for better or worse, are evidently destined to form the distinguishing characteristic between middle-age and modern polity and civilization. Victor Emmanuel not only there proclaimed his determination to uphold the rights of his new crown, and the dignity of the Italian nation against the pretensions of Rome, but, for the first time, threw himself personally into two of the great religious

questions of the day, and announced his own adherence to, and advocacy of, the principle of the total separation of Church and State, and the general suppression of the Religious Corporations (*la segregazione della Chiesa dallo Stato, e la soppressione delle Corporazioni Religiose*).

It was singular to hear a theory of government, hitherto only worked out practically in all its bearings in the New World, thus formally promulgated by the Sovereign of the most antique social portion of the Old.

The ceremony, therefore, both in its material features and its religious and ecclesiastical manifestations, seems to be well worthy of some record; and when, to these considerations, is added the opportunity it afforded of witnessing the demeanour and testing the feelings of an immense assembly of Italians of the upper and middle classes, on some of the most delicate and exciting topics of the day, I trust I have advanced sufficient reasons for devoting another letter to the occasion.

The opening of the Italian Parliament, then, for the first time in the new capital, took place, as announced two days ago, on the 18th inst. Every circumstance of auspicious augury seemed to be in favour of this further step in the national

development, except the weather. For more than a week previously, the entire attention of the city had been fixed upon the approaching incident, and preparations of every kind, private and public, had been making for its due solemnization. Public feeling and the first effervescence of metropolitan pride and dignity, which already rose very high in Florence, had received additional impulse by the popular journey of the King to Naples, to visit the Cholera Hospital, and by his half public entry on his return. The Commander-in-Chief of the National Guard issued his proclamation, inviting the assemblage of his civic legions in full force; not, it was said, so much in obedience to their military obligations, as to make a voluntary demonstration of their own patriotic ardour. The Syndic, too, or Gonfaloniere as he used to be called, summoned the citizens to be equally demonstrative in their respect for the Sovereign and the representatives of the nation, now for the first time about to assemble within their walls, by unfurling on all sides the national banner, draping their windows and balconies, and, above all, by a general and spontaneous illumination at night.

There is never much occasion, seemingly, to excite the Florentines to be merry and make a

holiday. For centuries almost, such doings have been to them the only real business of life, and they take to it with a will indicative of long habit and experience. Every household began by times to get up its frontage in the most approved style, with lampions, and escutcheons, and flags, and draperies, and patriotic devices. The whole town was *en fête*, as far as the population was concerned, while the public authorities were busily engaged in rearing trophies of arms in the Piazza della Signoria, running immense lines of light along the quays and bridges of the Arno, picking out with the same the picturesque outline of the Palazzo Vecchio and its unmatched tower, and preparing the massive dome of the cathedral and the exquisite proportions of Giotto's belfry, to appear under a similar aspect.

What with all this bustle of preparation, the prodigious influx of strangers and visitors, the enforced delay of so many travellers, compelled to tarry here a fortnight in order to obtain the certificate of a sojourn of that duration in a place free from cholera, which is now necessary in order to enter the Roman territory—what with all this unwonted crowding and animation, the once quiet and elegant little capital of Tuscany seemed quite beside itself. The hotels were full to overflowing,

every private apartment was taken up at almost any price; and fabulous charges were reported as being demanded for a single room. The constant arrival of Deputies and Senators was another grand source of excitement, and every day we were assured that Garibaldi had actually come to Florence, that he was certainly living in such-and-such an hotel, or that a committee of English matrons had been appointed—or rather had appointed themselves—to look after his toilette and table, and see the hero duly supplied with clean linen, port wine, and all other comforts.

Meanwhile the weather, with cruel treachery, continued to be of the very finest Florentine quality—clear, bright, bracing; bringing out the grand outline of the Apennines, whose crests were now just silvered with early snow, with metallic sharpness in the morning light, and tinging them with lovely rose-coloured and purple tints in the evening. Every one made sure of a fine day for the *fête*. Were we not in Italy? and does the weather ever change here from fair to foul in twenty-four hours, as it does in that compound of fog and smoke which, as an impertinent Frenchman once remarked, in England *s'appelle un climat*? Certainly, if the Italian skies had had any regard for their character, they would have stuck to the

pleasing physiognomy they had so long assumed, at least until they had smiled upon King and Parliament. But they proved, in this instance, totally regardless either of their own reputation or the national feelings. Saturday last turned out the very worst, indeed the only bad day we have had for a month past. The morning opened with the pelting of the pitiless rain, which never quite ceased till the evening; the night, however, though damp and dreary enough, was at least pitch dark and calm, and so far favourable to the illuminations. I will say nothing about draggled draperies, and dripping banners, and soaked trophies; nor yet about the royal procession from the Pitti Palace, wending its way through a crowd of umbrellas over the Ponte Vecchio, and by the narrow streets which lead thence to the place of assembly. I leave all these outside miseries and disappointments to be imagined; and proceed at once to a door of entrance into the Palazzo Vecchio, in the Via di Ninna, where I found already, at half-past nine, some twenty or thirty gentlemen and ladies in goodly attire, waiting in the rain to be let in. It was a pitiful sight to see the carriages drive up, and the beautiful bonnets and silk dresses and thin shoes step out (there was no help for it, unless the authorities had had the good sense and

politeness, which no "authorities" ever seem to have, to set the doors open from the first)—step out and take their stand on the pavement, or rather in the mud, with no other protection than a dripping umbrella over their gay apparel. In half an hour the official heart melted sufficiently to grant us an entrance; and we all scrambled up the long, narrow, winding, mediæval stone cork-screws, called in those days staircases, which lead up to the galleries of the grand old hall of the Cinque Centi.

And a truly grand old hall it is, and worth far more than the price paid to gain admission to it on such a day; enhanced as the pleasure was by the reflection of the difficulty of access, when only some hundred, or hundred and fifty tickets (exclusive of those claimed of right by each Senator and Deputy) remained to be given away to the general public, by the quæstorship of the Chamber. The *locale* itself must be far too well known, to require any lengthened notice of its primitive condition. I had seen, some weeks ago, through the kindness of Signor Falconiere, the Government architect, the preparations making for its transformation. These appeared at the time to be very judicious, and now fully justified the estimation then formed of them. With great good taste, the character of

the noble hall has been interfered with as little as possible. Its spacious, almost sublime, ceiling (said, like some others, to be the largest suspended flat surface in the world) still runs open to the eye, uninterruptedly, from end to end. A low screen simply has been thrown across one end, against which has been placed the throne; while the other end is occupied by the public galleries. In the space between them lies the Chamber proper, with its ranges of benches in horse-shoe fashion, covered with dark blue velvet, while the noble roof stretches majestically over the whole. The walls, as is well known, are covered with the grandly decorative, at least, if not most correctly artistic frescoes of Vasari, representing the victories of Cosmo the Great.

The general effect is simple, grand, and imposing, recalling somewhat the character of our own Chambers; and if with less of modern comfort and convenience, with a far higher air of antique grandeur. Every thing around, indeed, was well calculated to inspire elevated and patriotic emotions. The loftiness of the richly gilded ceiling, hung so high in air, its prodigious sweep from end to end without a single break, a very miracle of architectural skill; the gigantic frescoes of Vasari which adorn its walls, displaying heroes of

superhuman size doing battle on their elephantine war-horses under the Great Cosmo, in all the grandeur of mediæval panoply; even the defectiveness, at first, of the dim light streaming in with difficulty from the dull day without,—all spoke of that far-off traditional greatness which, in defiance of the rules of physical perspective, makes the distant past often assume, in a moral sense, proportions in inverse ratio to its remoteness. As far as hearing goes, the new chamber seems well adapted to its purpose, if I may judge from the experience of a conversation held with a friend at either extremity during my first visit to it. This again was fully confirmed by the effect of the King's voice; but then his is an organ altogether beyond the power of ordinary mortals. Victor Emmanuel is most assuredly trumpet-tongued; an orator endowed by nature to speak in such a theatre.

On each side of the throne are raised galleries for the Corps Diplomatique. These began to fill early, and there might be seen the bulky form of Count Usedom, the Prussian Minister, looking, despite his *grand cordon*, not very unlike the Suisse in a French Church, on a full-dress occasion. Mr. Elliot, with just a bit of gold lace on his coat, and Mr. Layard with none at all, looked very small beside the fine feathers of the Berlin

representative. But attention was soon called from diplomacy to the floor of the house, as Senators and Deputies came pouring in, and every one became anxious to recognize old faces and make acquaintance with new ones. A sensation was created, and a moment's pause made in the general murmur by the sight of blind old Gino Capponi, led gently and respectfully across the floor to take his seat and oath for the first time as Senator, and give the support of his honoured name and spotless character to the new order of things. There is none nobler or wealthier in all Florence, than he; and he is liberal, both in fortune and sentiments, as he is noble and wealthy. Ricasoli, too, was there, in deep mourning for the loss of his daughter. I have since understood that he is highly pleased with the King's speech, and especially with the firm attitude displayed by it against Roman pretensions. He is an enemy to all mere "compromise," or patching up things with Rome, and was greatly adverse, on that account, even to Vegezzi's mission. Boggio's appearance created some curiosity by reason of his late visit to Rome, and subsequent publication respecting it. He is a short, stout, commonplace-looking man, and although professing, I understand, no particular religious principles of his

own, occupies the position of confidential legal adviser and advocate of the clerical party. The reverse of Ricasoli, he would compromise or patch up matters with Rome in any way which might assist, in his opinion, to consolidate the political situation of the country. Cantu was absent from the Chamber, but D'Ondes Reggio was there, with his scholastic, professorial aspect. Minghetti looks the finished gentleman whom all pronounce him to be. Count Pepoli has a Bonapartian look about his square-shaped head, and sharp, intelligent French, rather than Italian physiognomy. All the Deputies and Senators were dressed in black, and wore white cravats and straw-coloured gloves, with the exception of General Carini of Sicily, who alone distinguished himself by his old-fashioned blue coat and metal buttons. Ratazzi looked as thin and boyish as ever in person, an appearance which contrasts strongly with the expression of true Italian subtlety which marks his countenance, and, it is alleged, his character. On the whole, the Italian Parliament presents a very fair external appearance, and prepossesses one more favourably in that respect than I anticipated. I detected few or no examples of coarseness or rusticity in the Assembly.

On the very stroke of eleven, with military ex-

actness, and just as the busy murmur rose highest, the words "*Il Re*" were uttered loudly by an official. The instantaneous and deep silence which ensued was very striking. General La Marmora, in full uniform, his breast covered with decorations, placed himself on the right of the throne, the other Ministers being ranged on either side. In another moment Victor Emmanuel, in a general's uniform, walked into the hall, with his usual soldierlike step and bearing, followed by his two sons, also in uniform—Princes Umberto and Amadeus, gentlemanlike young men, with good carriage and bearing. It was quite impossible that the King should not be pleased with his warm reception, and he evidently was so. It was some minutes before he could stop bowing or take his seat, so long and hearty was the greeting he met with. It is difficult to say why applause sometimes strikes you as being more real and voluntary in one place than in another; but, certainly, Italian applause, especially as contrasted with French, does, just now, strike one very forcibly as being voluntary, sincere, and hearty. When the King was seated, with his two sons standing on either side, they formed a martial group, not unworthy the chivalrous character of the House of Savoy.

After a somewhat tedious ceremony, which had better have been performed at a previous sitting, of calling over the members by name, while each replied "*giuro*"—"I swear,"—Victor Emmanuel proceeded to read his speech in a right royal voice. I certainly never heard such an organ. It filled the immense hall like the note of a bugle. The King read very slowly, and with great distinctness; but his pronunciation, or rather enunciation, is Piedmontese, and slightly guttural. The chief point made by the speech was certainly that in which it upholds the rights of the crown and of the nation against Popish pretensions, in the following words:—

"At the close of the last legislature," it said, "out of respect for the Head of the Church, and with the desire to afford satisfaction to the religious interests of the majority, my Government acceded to proposals of negotiations with the Pontifical See.

"But these it felt it to be its duty to cut short, when found to militate against the rights of my crown and of the nation."

For several minutes the King was compelled to pause, so vociferous and general were the acclamations of approval which burst from the assembly. Within the Chamber itself, the yellow

gloves of the Deputies, I observed, moved almost *en masse;* certainly, no visible section of the House remained either motionless or silent.

Nearly the same applause greeted the following passage, on the separation of Church and State, and the suppression of the religious corporations:

"The Italian people must throw aside those remnants of the past, which impede the full development of their new existence. With this view, you will have also to direct your deliberations to the subjects of the separation of Church and State, and the suppression of the religious orders."

The plague-spot of the discourse was, of course, as every one expected, the finances—how to reduce the expenses, and yet keep up the army. A reduction of the latter, as far as active service goes, seems unhappily to be imperative. But every one waits to learn the feeling of the new Parliament. The nation is confident, and prepared, I think, for every sacrifice, rather than go back one step in the surprising career of the last five years.

The King left amidst the same applause which greeted his entrance, and the vast assembly dispersed under no small emotion. The reception, both of the speaker and of the address he delivered, seems to be regarded here as something

altogether exceptional. The scene and the occasion will certainly be long remembered by those who were present at them.

. Since the above was written, I have had further opportunities of learning, on good authority, what are the real views of some of the most eminent members of the Liberal-Catholic party in Italy, on the questions touched upon by the King in his opening address—the separation of Church and State, and the suppression of the religious orders; and I have been surprised to hear how far these views are carried, by persons whose religious faith and Catholicity are beyond dispute. They do not, indeed, as yet openly promulgate such opinions; because they consider them to be too much in advance of the intelligence and enlightenment of the great bulk of the nation, by whom they must first be understood and willingly accepted, before they can be either effectually or beneficially carried out. But, in point of fact, there is no shrinking, if necessary, on their part, from a complete breach with Rome. On the contrary, their chief apprehension is, lest Rome should be all along secretly prepared to yield, as soon as ever she finds herself fairly driven to extremities.

These men, on the other hand, earnestly desire that there may be no yielding, no compromise, no patching up,—that the breach and the separation may be complete and final. But, then, it is essential to bear in mind what, in their opinion, the breach and the separation will be *between*. The separation and breach which they are willing to encounter is one, not between Italy and the Catholic Church—of such a schism not a thought is entertained; on the contrary, it is regarded with unfeigned repugnance and aversion. But what is desired, or at least what there is no hesitation to face, is the complete disseverance and emancipation of Italy from the Roman Curia, "between which and the Catholic Church," according to the constant expression of one of them, "it is necessary more and more earnestly to distinguish, and insist upon the distinction." In short, a National Church, liberated alike from the spiritual thraldom of the Papacy and the incubus of the Roman Curia, with a Metropolitan of its own, accepted or not, as the case might be, as the Primate of Christendom, but at all events in a position, by the acceptance of adequate reforms both in doctrine and practice, to reunite with other branches of the Church Catholic. Such is the programme of religious reformation, which the

leading lay Catholic intelligence of Italy does not hesitate to mark out for itself, in the future.

With respect to the questions of the suppression of the Monastic Orders, and the re-distribution of Church property, the debate now pending in the Italian Parliament, and the discussions of the public press have made them subjects too familiar, for it to be necessary for me to enter upon them here. The measures proposed in general, with the exception of that put forward recently by Minghetti, in his pamphlet, would approximate the position of the Church in Italy very much to what it now is in France—the quarter from whence the model of their new organization has evidently been supplied. But there exists, besides, another project, brought forward originally by Ricasoli, and since too much lost sight of, which is well deserving of attention, and of which, as it has now become less accessible than the others spoken of, I append a brief analysis. It will be seen that it differs from the other schemes, whether official or unofficial, in a very vital point; for, whereas the Ministerial plans attribute the management of ecclesiastical property almost wholly to the Government[1], and Minghetti's plan leaves it

[1] According to the Ministerial plan brought forward in February last, the entire fund to be created by the conver-

entirely to the Clergy, Ricasoli's proposal is that the regulation of such matters should be vested in the hands of the Faithful themselves, both lay and clerical,—that is, of the Church. He repudiates the mere political machinery introduced, with the principles of the French Revolution, into the administration of ecclesiastical affairs, to return to the great principle of the Reformation, viz., the admission of the lay element, taken generally from among the Faithful themselves, and not merely from the civil government, into the direction of the temporalities of the Church, as an integral part of the ecclesiastical polity.

The novel feature in Baron Ricasoli's measure is the creation of "diocesan" and "parochial" *Congregazioni*, for the management of the temporal affairs of the Church. By the first chapter of the Act, entitled, "Of the Proprietorship of Church Property and the Civil Administration of the same," it is enacted (sec. i.) that all such property shall be vested in the entire community of the several dioceses and parishes, to be represented by Congregations, invested with civil rights.

sion of Church property into Five per Cent. Stock is to be administered, under the direction of the Minister of Public Worship, by delegates nominated by Royal decree, and assisted by an Administrative Council.

These Congregations are (sec. ii.) to be elected by all Catholics of thirty years of age, resident for six months in the diocese or parish. All ecclesiastical patronage is to be administered by them, and all legacies and revenues of vacant offices or benefices, or suppressed religious houses, are to devolve to them.

Other enactments provide either for existing circumstances or future contingencies, vesting the management of all Church property, of every description, in the Congregations, for the benefit of the parish or diocese to which it is appropriated, and then throwing upon them all ecclesiastical expenses hitherto sustained either by the Government or the parishes, or any other suppressed administrative bodies.

The salaries of Archbishops and Bishops, of Canons and Chapters, the preservation of Cathedrals, and the celebration of the Offices in them, the maintenance of the seminary and Bishop's palace, and of all ecclesiastical edifices within the diocese standing in the light of public buildings, are declared to be "obligatory" expenses of the "diocesan" Congregations. The stipends of the parish priest, his vicars and coadjutors, with the care of the parish church and its adjuncts, and the religious services to be celebrated in them,

are declared to be obligatory expenses of the "parochial" Congregations. The salaries of Archbishops in cities of above 100,000 inhabitants are fixed at 1000*l.* per annum; below that population, at 800*l.* Those of Bishops, under the same circumstances, at 1000*l.* and 600*l.* respectively. The minimum income of a parish priest is fixed at 40*l.*, and that of a vicar at 24*l.*

By chapter second, the property of the secular clergy, except such as is already devoted to the purposes of education and charity, is alienated and funded. All ecclesiastical benefices are abolished to which no cure of souls is attached. The episcopacy is limited to one member for each administrative Province, and large reductions are made in the Chapters.

By chapter third, Religious Orders are declared to be no longer recognized by the State, and their houses abolished. Annuities varying from 24*l.* to 16*l.* a year, according to age, are granted to the ecclesiastical inmates, and 10*l.* to lay brethren[2].

[2] The Ministerial Report attached to this proposed Bill (November, 1864) states the entire ecclesiastical revenues of the country at 67,444,656 frs., or about 2,700,000*l.* Those of the religious houses which are to be suppressed amount, according to the same authority, to about 400,000*l.* per annum.

The property held by them, with the exception of buildings devoted to charity or education, which are to be handed over to the communes, is to be disposed of by the aid of the civil administration, and divided into three equal parts. One of these parts is to be assigned to the parochial Congregations: in the first place, to make up the salaries of the parochial clergy to the required amount, when the ordinary resources of the parish are insufficient for that purpose; and, secondly, when that is accomplished, for other parochial necessities. The other two-thirds

The Government project converts the whole of these revenues, after making certain deductions, into an equal sum of 5 per cent. *rente*, to be administered in the manner above mentioned. The number of Bishops, which the same report states to be at present no fewer than 235, with revenues varying from 80*l.* to 4000*l.*, is to be reduced to 69, or ten more than the number of the administrative Provinces of the kingdom, with salaries varying from 480*l.* to 960*l.* per annum. The reasons alleged for retaining the ten extra Sees is that they stand in an exceptional position, either by their historical origin, or from being placed in the centre of large masses of population. After all pensions and other obligations have been discharged, and all the necessary wants of the Church supplied, the surplus of the fund is to be applied to raising the stipends of the poorer clergy, to the restoration of Cathedrals, and other special expenses, and to the promotion of education, and of works of charity and public utility.

are to be appropriated to the communes in which the several suppressed religious houses existed, in order to maintain or create charitable or educational establishments.

There are, of course, many other provisions, and exemptions, and special regulations in a Bill extending over sixty-one sections, and dealing with such complicated subjects as Church property and ecclesiastical administration in Italy. But the above will suffice to show the character of the measure, the chief feature of which, and that to which Baron Ricasoli, who presided at the committee by whom it was drawn up, attached and still attaches the utmost importance, is the Diocesan and Parochial *Congregazioni*, and their attributions.

The Report of the Committee on the subject, after remarking that Italy does not acknowledge the temporal power of the Pope, and that therefore the State is not called upon to treat with the Roman Curia, declares it nevertheless to be necessary to proceed courageously with a reform in the administration of Catholic worship, but without invading the true rights of the Church. For the Church to be free, it says, the civil administration of public worship must reside neither directly nor indirectly in the State, but must have its own

proper autonomy. Who then, it asks, ought to be the proprietors and administrators of the temporal goods of the Church? Not the clergy, for they represent only the elected portion of the Church, but have no inherent right of proprietorship. The patrimony of the Church is given for, and comes from, the Faithful, and belongs therefore to them only. In order that they might be duly represented, it was essential to create these Parochial and Diocesan Congregations, to assign to them the patrimony necessary for the maintenance of public worship, and determine their attributes. The Commission adopted, almost unanimously, the principle of these Congregations, persuaded that by so restoring this administration of Church property to the Faithful, they at once performed an act of justice, and one of religious utility both to clergy and people. With regard to the ecclesiastical patronage conferred on the Congregations, the Commission says, that such patronage being a part of the temporalities of public worship, it must be restored to those to whom it of right belongs.

APPENDIX.

THE foregoing letters have elicited the following correspondence on the subject of them in the pages of the *Guardian*:—

THE ITALIAN CHURCH.

SIR,—I waited in perfect confidence for the letter of your correspondent at Florence which has this day appeared. I felt quite sure that, with the ability and power of investigation which he displayed, he would, after he had done with the Vaudois and Signor De Sanctis, strike upon the lode which he has now found, the true reforming party within the Church of Italy, upon whom the hopes of Italy as a nation and as a Church rest. There *is* a party, as he has learnt and reported, whose object it is (to use the words of a Turin Professor) to "purge their Church of the plague of Popery," and to constitute it an independent National Church, under its own Archbishops and Bishops. Of course they do not make so much show as even one congregation of converts, which can at once be pointed to as a visible result of Protestant opinions and feelings; but, if they succeed, they will work a work which will leave a mark for ever, not only upon their country, but upon Christendom.

In order that they may succeed, two conditions are necessary:—1. A political exigency on the part of statesmen. 2. A theological opinion within the Church, on which

a statesman may rely to support him in action. The political exigency exists. It is all-important to the kingdom of Italy to have a National Church of its own, free from the trammels of the Papacy; and statesmen know this. It is certain that one of the first acts of one who will very probably become Prime Minister of Italy will be to pass a law making the oaths at present taken by Italian Bishops to the Pope illegal, while, at the same time, he recommends the Crown to fill up the now vacant sees without waiting for the Papal confirmation. If this be done, the National Church of Italy will be *ipso facto* constituted: the Papal theory of unity will have received a death-blow in its own lands; primitive truth, and, with it, the hope of unity on primitive principles, will emerge. But for this to be effected, the other condition must likewise be realized. A theological opinion both of clergy and laity must exist within the Church, which would justify a statesman in breaking with Rome, and would lead back the Church, when free, to primitive truth. That there is a party which is the exponent of this opinion your correspondent has reported, and I echo his words: "It is evidently up-hill work with them, and it ought, I think, to become a serious question with English Churchmen, whether they ought not to stretch out a right hand of sympathy and fellowship with such men more directly and effectually than has hitherto been done."

But how? There are two errors, which, as English Churchmen, we must avoid. One is the encouragement of the institution of separated congregations and communities under the idea that we are to form a new Church, into which the members of the old historical Church are to transfer themselves—a thing which never has been done, and never will be done, and never can be done; but the attempt to do which may so weaken the reforming element within the Italian Church as to render it powerless, and so anger moderate men as to throw them on the side of the reactionaries.

The other error is, that of folding our arms and saying that it is not our business. Thus doing, we forget that axiom of Catholic love, that it is the duty of Churchmen *βοηθεῖν ἐπὶ τὸ κάμνον*, to carry their help to any part of the Church which needs help, and which they can help. And in this case, as your correspondent says, "Remember that *these* are the men in Italy who, in their religious feelings and views, sympathize *par excellence* with *us*."

That there is a greater sympathy awakened in England than has existed heretofore, is proved by the fact that the funds of the Anglo-Continental Society, which has been for eleven years working in this field, have been this year doubled, so that it is now enabled to maintain six agents in Italy, besides publishing and distributing a considerable number of Italian books and tracts illustrative of the true principles of reformation. But its funds are still very inadequate. I hope that your correspondent's letter will arouse an increased interest in the subject.

Norwich, Nov. 9, 1865. FREDERICK MEYRICK.

SIR,—Will you allow me to add, as a supplement to my letter of yesterday, that in a letter received this morning, Archdeacon Wordsworth—whom I venture, without his leave, to quote—says, "I have no hesitation in expressing my belief (from a large induction of particulars) that nearly a third of the Italian priesthood would range themselves on the side of a Scriptural and Catholic reformation, if they were protected from the anathemas of the Vatican acting upon them through the Episcopate." He says also, "If people are discontented [at the English Church having done so little], the remedy is in their own hands. *Let them subscribe*

to the Anglo-Continental Society." I will gladly send a report to any one who desires it.

Norwich, Nov. 10, 1865. FREDERICK MEYRICK.

SIR,—Referring to the appeal of your correspondent at Florence on behalf of those poor but faithful priests who he states are now suffering for their adhesion to the Catholic faith against that of the Pope, I shall feel pleased in being one of a hundred in raising 2000*l.*, by subscribing 20*l.* each, for the purposes mentioned by your correspondent.

Among your large number of readers that or five times the amount ought to be at once forthcoming. R. H. B.

SIR,—I shall be happy to subscribe the second 20*l.* to the Italian Priest-Protection Fund.

AN IRISH PRESBYTER.

ANGLO-CONTINENTAL SOCIETY.

SIR,—The independent testimony of your correspondent to the work which has been going on, is going on, and is to be done in Italy, emboldens me to make an appeal in behalf of the Anglo-Continental Society in your columns. There can be no longer any doubt of there being a vast sphere of legitimate labour, and this sphere is that which the Anglo-Continental Society has, from its origin, marked out for itself. Now, I claim that this Society should become the trusted handmaid of the Church in dealing with members of foreign Churches and communities, just as (to compare what is as yet small with what is happily now great) is the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in dealing with our colonists and the surrounding heathen. Its work is one of extreme delicacy, and of course it is attacked on both sides, just as the

Church of England is. One calls it semi-Popish, another ultra-Protestant. These accusations balance and cancel each other, just as they do when made, with, I believe, exactly the same degree of justice and of plausibility, against the Church of England herself. I claim for the Society the credit of always having acted with discretion and caution, and if we have thereby not pleased some who desire more precipitate action, we have obtained the support and confidence of the four Primates of the Church of England and Ireland, as well as of thirty English, Scottish, Colonial, and American Bishops, and—the greatest pledge which we could give to the Church—the Bishop of Ely not only has accepted the office of President of the society, but takes a warm interest in its operations. But we do want funds. During the past year a narrow-minded man (whom, however, I honour for having taken an interest in Continental Christians) jeered at us in a large public meeting at Islington, as having many Bishops, but little money; and another, equally narrow-minded, proposed to institute a new society, mainly on the grounds that we had no adequate funds. It is quite true that 800*l.* per annum is not sufficient; and as one of the Secretaries of the Society, though without the knowledge of the President and Committee, I appeal to your readers to enable us to double, treble, or quadruple that sum in the course of the present year. A full account of the operations of the Society will be found in the report just published by Messrs. Rivington.

FREDERICK MEYRICK,
Hon. Sec. of the Anglo-Continental Society.

Norwich, Nov. 24, 1865.

I shall be happy to give 20*l.* to make up the 2000*l.* proposed by one of your correspondents, provided that sum be dispensed by the Society.

SIR,—I should be glad to meet other subscriptions of 20*l.* with a like sum for the support of those among the clergy and laity of the Church in Italy who, seeking to reform it on the primitive model, are suffering for the truth's sake. But I prefer to give my contribution through the agency of the Anglo-Continental Society, which has now for eleven years been engaged in encouraging a true Catholic reform in Italy and elsewhere, and not without success. It is this Society's work to which De Sanctis refers in the quotation from a letter of his in your correspondent's last letter from Florence, and I believe every hearty English Churchman who will take the trouble to read its reports (published by Rivingtons) will give it his full sympathy. H. S.

Nov. 23, 1865.

SIR,—I have read with much interest your Florence correspondent's letter in the *Guardian* of the 8th inst., and can fully confirm what he writes on the prospects of a religious reformation in Italy, and with him regret the small share the Church of England has in the present movement. It is indeed sad to think that that Church, which, were it better known by Italians, would be received by them with much greater sympathy than any other communion, remains almost unrepresented, and the rich harvest is left to others. I know, from personal observation, that wherever attempts have been made to enlighten the Italians, and where parts of our Prayer Book have been translated, the circulation has been surprising.

Here, in truth, is a great work to be done, for all attempts that have hitherto been made by courageous and well-disposed men, have proved abortive, and the results have been comparatively small, from want of funds, and the impossibility of coming forward on a larger scale.

I have no doubt that by your powerful advocacy a more decided part might be taken by English Churchmen in this important work; for, as an intelligent Italian once said to me, "Our regeneration will be incomplete unless we can combine with our political revolution a religious reformation."

I regret that I cannot imitate the liberality of our Scottish friends and offer my 1000*l.* towards the object, but if a subscription were started by English Churchmen, my 50*l.* would be most cheerfully given; and I have the firm conviction that the seed sown would produce a hundred—aye, a thousand fold. A. B.

Lucerne, Nov. 17, 1865.

THE END.

GILBERT AND RIVINGTON, PRINTERS, ST. JOHN'S SQUARE, LONDON.

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